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Joseph Ellicott and Stories of the Holland Purchase

BY
CLARA L. T. WILLIAMS

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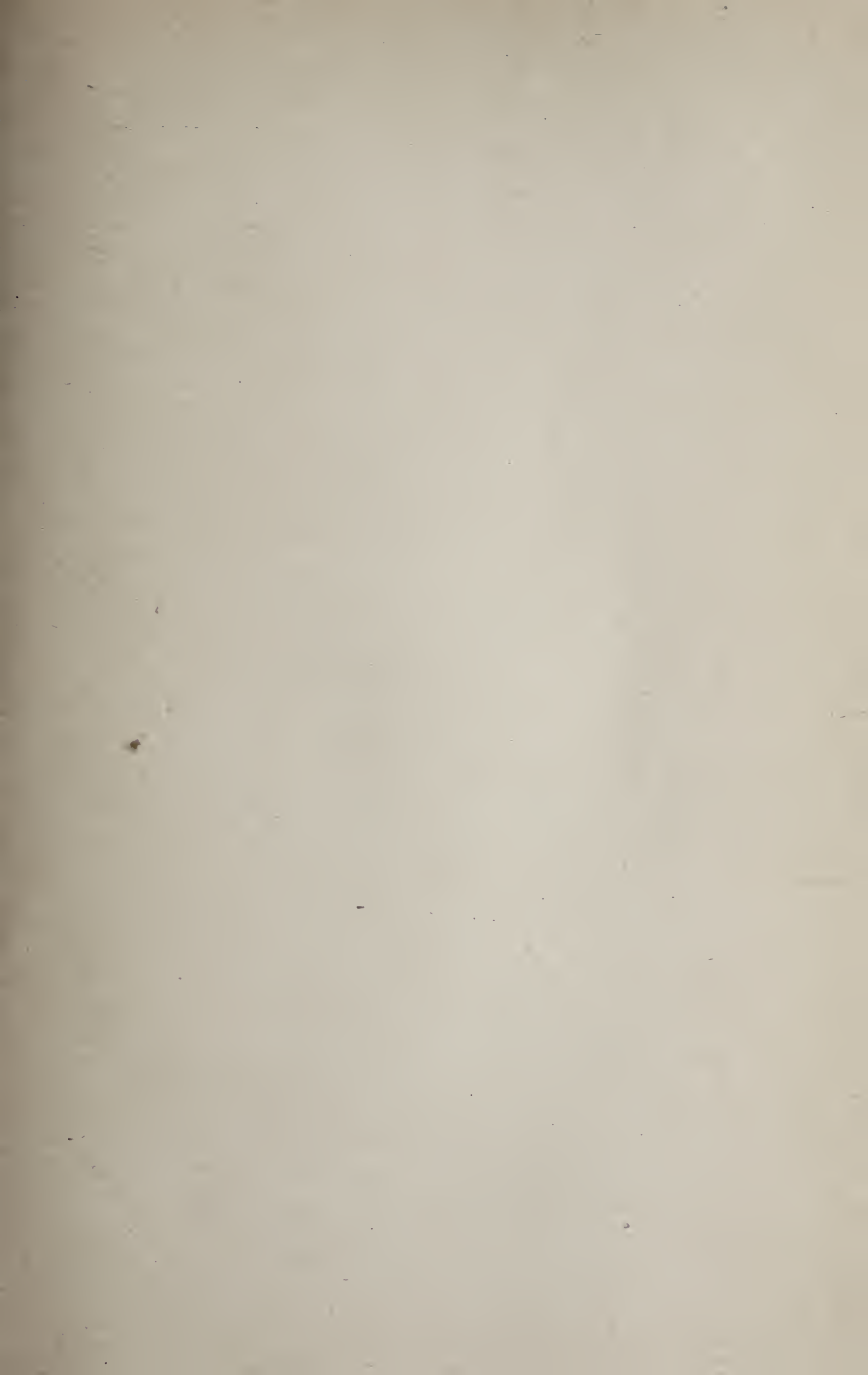
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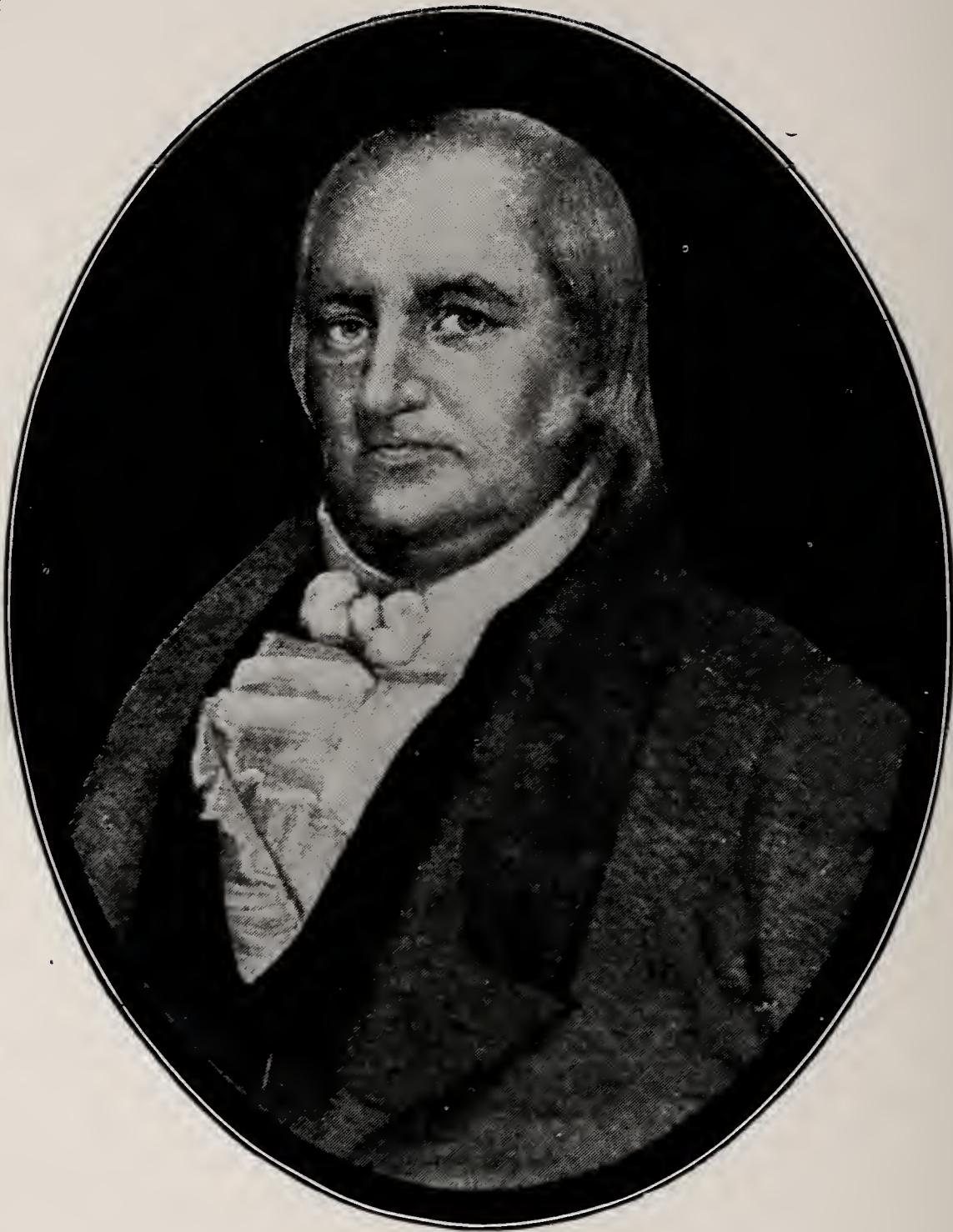
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Joseph Ellicott

1760 — 1826

Founder of Batavia and Buffalo and
Local Agent of the Holland Land Co.

Joseph Ellicott
and Stories of the
Holland Purchase

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Joseph Ellicott and Stories of the Holland Purchase

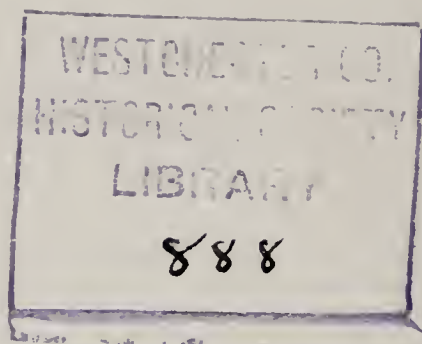
BY
CLARA L. T. WILLIAMS

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Foreword

The materials for this sketch of Joseph Ellicott's life and the mosaic picture of early days on the Holland Purchase have been gathered from many sources.

The work was undertaken for several reasons: First, because there is no adequate biography of the grand central figures of early times on the Holland Purchase; second, because our early histories are out of print and not easy to find; third, because the history of few parts of our great country is so well worth knowing and so little known by its own people. No region has more charm and romantic appeal than Western New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The chief obligations for materials used in this brief sketch are to Charles W. Evans' "Family History, Fox, Ellicott, Evans and Others," Martha E. Tyson's "Settlement of Ellicott's Mills," Catherine Van Courtlandt Mathews' "Andrew Ellicott, His Life and Letters," Paul D. Evans' "The Holland Land Company," "Turner's History of the Holland Purchase," "Andrew and Joseph Ellicott," by Dr. G. Hunter Bartlett, "Historical Sketches of Western New York," by E. W. Vanderhoof, "Joseph Ellicott, the Founder Of Buffalo," by James Lock Babcock, "The Genesee Country" and "The Old Land Office at Batavia" by Prof. John Kennedy and "Publications of Buffalo Historical Society," Vols. II and XXVI, besides many unsigned articles in newspapers and magazines.

ANCESTRY

The Ellicott family was of Saxon origin and lived in Devonshire, England, at the time of the Norman Conquest by William the Conqueror in 1066. The ancestors of the only Ellicotts who ever emigrated to America were highly respected and influential members of the Society of Friends as early as 1680.

CHAPTER I

THE ELLICOTTS IN PENNSYLVANIA

1707.

Andrew Ellicott, son of Andrew and Elizabeth Ellicott, of Collumpton, near Exeter, in Devonshire, England, was married February 10, 1707, to Mary, eldest daughter of Francis and Tabitha Fox, of St. Germans, in Cornwall, England. They were married in Friends' Meeting. Andrew Ellicott, the father, was a land-holder in Collumpton, on the Colm River, ten miles from Exeter, and it was his land that Joseph Ellicott, the grandson of Andrew and Mary Fox Ellicott, went from America to England to inherit in the year 1766. (Andrew and Joseph have been conspicuous family names as far back as the earliest records of the Ellicott family.)

IN 1730.

Andrew Ellicott who married Mary Fox was a manufacturer of wool goods, but being unsuccessful in business decided to visit "America, the Land of Promise." His eldest son, Andrew, accompanied him, but his wife, son Joseph, and daughter Mary remained in England; and after Andrew departed his wife paid all his debts from her private fortune, and was very anxious for his return. In fact when they left England the two Andrews had no intention of remaining in America, but while in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, the son became attached to a wonderfully fine and efficient young woman of his own age, Ann Bye, the daughter of a prominent Friend and wealthy land-owner of Buckingham, and this love affair changed the Ellicott family history entirely. The father and son went to Philadel-

phia to embark for England but young Andrew was *desperate* and told his father that he would not and could not go back to England, for he loved Ann Bye. The father did not feel that he could leave young Andrew in this crisis so they returned to Buckingham and bought a farm of fifty acres on the main road from Philadelphia to New York, a short distance from Buckingham Meeting-House.

1731.

Andrew, the son, married *Ann Bye*, June 17, 1731, in Friends' Meeting. They lived with his father, who never returned to England, but who survived his son Andrew more than twenty years. These two were the only Ellicotts who emigrated to America. Andrew Ellicott the younger died in 1741 after a happy married life of ten years, leaving five sons, viz:—Joseph, Andrew, Nathaniel, Thomas and John.

1744.

Ann Bye Ellicott married her second husband, George Wall, an Englishman, in 1744. She was then in her thirty-sixth year. George Wall, a wealthy man, was not a member of the Society of Friends, consequently the overseers of the Meeting reported that "Ann Ellicott, who married George Wall, had married out of unity of Friends" and she was "read out of Meeting."

There were two children born of Ann's second marriage, George Wall, Jr. and Mary Wall. Years later George Wall, Jr. was interested with his Ellicott half brothers in the purchase of Ellicott's Upper Mills in Maryland.

Thomas Ellicott, one of Ann's grandsons, remembered her well as a woman of fine physique who was highly esteemed for her knowledge of medicine. "She was unquestionably a very superior and brilliant woman, and the accounts we have show that both her

mental and physical characteristics were impressed, not only on her children, but on many of her descendants," writes Charles W. Evans.

Ann Bye Ellicott Wall survived her second husband for some years. She died in 1786 in the seventy-eighth year of her age. She was always energetic, helpful, and kind, whether in the humble home of Andrew Ellicott or sharing the riches and comforts of the Wall mansion as its honored mistress. But, the Walls had no attachment to the principles of Friends and Ann's son George Wall, Jr. held the title of Colonel-lieutenant of Bucks County, Penna., during the Revolutionary War.

"The sons of Andrew and Ann Bye Ellicott received a good plain English education during their minority, though from the poor circumstances in which they were left they endured much hardship before attaining manhood, when all of them were of fine personal appearance, five feet ten or eleven inches in height and well proportioned. They were all mathematical geniuses.

"*Samuel Armitage* had been appointed their guardian after the death of their father in 1741. Joseph, the eldest, father of 'Joseph of Batavia,' was only nine years of age when their mother married George Wall. Armitage placed *Joseph* with a weaver to learn the trade, *Andrew* with a carpenter, and *Nathaniel* with a blacksmith. Thomas and John were too young to leave home. Samuel Armitage said, 'Jo is a smart active boy, and a good weaver, nevertheless his mind runs wholly to the study of mechanics.' He was so anxious to learn some mechanical business that he was sent after a time to work with Samuel Bleaker, repairing grist mills. Here the lad evidently obtained his first knowledge of mills. Before he was of age Joseph married Judith Bleaker, his employer's daughter. The young couple were very poor and the next year they were obliged to go to his mother's with the addition of a baby boy who lived to bear the name of Andrew, 'The Astronomer.' Joe was very much depressed by his pov-

erty and went to his guardian, Samuel Armitage, for advice, but all Armitage could say was, 'Come to weaving again.' But observing that Jo was very dejected, he invited him to go fishing for trout. Arriving at the stream the older man soon detected a change in Jo; his eyes were beaming with pleasure, his spirits high. 'What a good mill-seat!' he exclaimed. 'This would be a good place for a mill!' Samuel argued that he was not able to build a mill. 'Oh yes,' said Jo; 'you could get fine custom, and I will superintend it, and make the boys help me;' meaning Thomas and John. Jo was rich in friends if not in money. The neighbors liked him; and he talked to them of the advantages of a grist mill, on Armitage's brawling trout stream, morning, noon and night. They in turn persuaded Samuel Armitage to build a mill, and they 'would trust him for work and materials.'

"Jo superintended it. Andrew did the carpenter's work, Nathaniel the blacksmith's work and John and Thomas assisted also, and the mill was finished before Jo was twenty-one.

"This was the best mill of the kind in Bucks County and raised the reputation of the Ellicotts very much. Samuel Armitage said it was a support to himself and family."

Time rolled on and Joseph Ellicott's fortunes improved. He was engaged with Hugh Burgess in the manufacture of flour at Jones Falls, not accumulating riches but content and happy.

On November 1st, 1760, their fifth child, a son, named Joseph for his father, was born to Joseph and Judith Bleaker Ellicott, born a subject of King George III who had just ascended the throne of England. His reign of sixty years coincided with the most active and important period of Joseph Junior's life. "Within this long period the United States achieved their independence, the mad drama of the French revolution was played to the curtain fall, Napoleon Bonaparte won and lost an empire, and the introduction of steam wrought

industrial changes as great as those which plunged two continents in blood."

At this time, 1760, the greater part of Pennsylvania was a wilderness, literally "Penn's Woods," and was ruled by deputies appointed by the heirs of William Penn. It will be remembered that William Penn had taken this vast territory in payment of a debt due his father from the Crown. He made his Colony a refuge for his Quaker brethren and others who were persecuted in England. Into one of these Quaker homes of the colony Joseph Ellicott, who conquered the wilderness of Western New York, came. He was cordially welcomed, not only by his parents but by his handsome, efficient grandmother, Ann Bye Ellicott Wall, who presented the sturdy little fellow to his father. "He resembles thee, my first born, and he shall be named for thee, Joseph," she announced. Grandmother Ann Bye, as the family called her, still used the "plain" language to which she was born.

However 1760 was not an altogether happy year for the Joseph Ellicott family for a very dear and intimate friend, William Evans, died leaving a widow and several children, who found the Ellicotts to be friends indeed.

When Joseph Jr. was six years old strange and wonderful things began to happen. Joseph senior received notice that he was heir to his great grandfather's property in Collumpton, Devonshire, England. The eldest son and the eldest grandson being dead, Joseph Ellicott, Sr., was the next heir, as he was the eldest son of the grandson. And Joseph must go to England to settle the estate. So he sold his interest in the mills to finance the journey, which was a great undertaking in those days. Besides he hesitated about leaving the family. His eldest child, Andrew, "the astronomer", was only twelve years of age and between him and the twin babies, Benjamin and Rachel, were five other little Ellicotts. But Judith, the wife and mother, was a brave and sensible woman and she insisted that the journey

must be undertaken. Of course, "Grandmother Ann Bye" was a tower of strength to leave near the little family, and her husband, George Wall, also evinced a kindly interest. Preparations for the journey began and "the neighbors opened their eyes and from calling him Jo, enlarged it to Joseph Ellicott." Twelve-year-old Andrew promised to be the *man* of the family. and little Joseph said, "I will help mother take care of the twins." Joseph Jr. always loved the twins. They were his special concern.

On December 19, 1766, Ellicott sailed from Philadelphia in the good ship "Hibernia" to visit England and receive his great-grandfather's estate in Collumpton, Devonshire. He carried with him a repeating watch which he had made some time before. Fortunately he kept a daily journal of his voyage and travels in England and Ireland which has been handed down to his descendants.

"Arriving at Londonderry in the North of Ireland, early in February, 1767, he sold one hundred and thirty-three hogsheads of flaxseed, which he had brought with him, for about two hundred pounds sterling; and purchased fourteen pieces of Irish linen for thirty-nine pounds sterling to present to his relatives and friends. Some portions of this linen were in the possession of the family for forty years or more."

He arrived in Liverpool on the 5th of April and from there went to Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol and Collumpton, purchasing cloth and cutlery on the way. On arriving at Collumpton he dined at the "Half-Moon Inn" and then went to see Thomas Mandit who showed him the houses which he had inherited. Joseph was provided with proofs that he was the eldest son and heir at law. On June 3rd, 1767, the sale of the property in Collumpton was completed, but he mentions considerable trouble in getting possession of the title papers. "There is a tradition," writes Charles W. Evans, "that he realized fifteen hundred pounds sterling from the estate—a large sum of money in those days."

He visited many relatives, among them an uncle, Francis Fox of St. Germans, in Cornwall. His grandmother, Mary Fox, who married his grandfather, Andrew Ellicott, was dead; and this Francis Fox, a very old man, was her brother.

"Joseph arrived in London on the 12th of June but the thoughts of his dear wife and children were scarce ever out of his mind and he did not enjoy the hurly-burly and confusion of the great metropolis, so he made preparations to return home. He left England in the ship 'Charming Rachel,' for Philadelphia late in July, and arrived on September 21, after fifty-two days sailing."

The traveler was welcomed home with great rejoicing. The Joseph Ellicotts gave a dinner to which friends and neighbors were invited. There were many men in drab, with horn buttons and straight collars, their stout legs clad in dark silk hose; but their shoes were without the silver buckles then in use. They wore broad brimmed beavers and carried canes. The women were dressed in gowns of drab or gray and wore white silk shawls and black silk-covered cardboard bonnets. The tables fairly groaned with delicious viands and were set with silver, fine linen and metal dishes which the master of the house had purchased abroad for a gift to his beloved Judith and the pieces were marked with their initials J. J. E.

As the guests asked many questions regarding his recent experiences on sea and land Ellicott entertained them by reading the story of his travels as it had been written day by day in his journal.

With the improvement in the family fortunes the Ellicott children were well tutored and schooled.

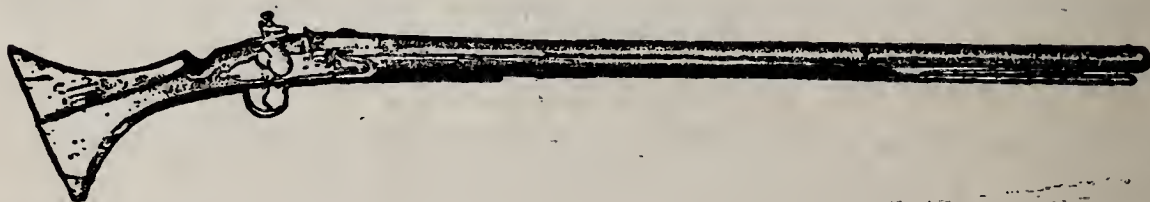
In the early seventeen seventies the intelligentsia of Pennsylvania read "Galloway's Gazette," "The Chronicle," which was rank Tory and afterwards suppressed, and "The Pennsylvania Journal." Some read both sides, even taking the Boston "Packet."

Friends were becoming politically divided and their

Meetings were long and sometimes not as calm as Quaker Meetings should be.

The year after his return from abroad Joseph Ellicott was high sheriff of Bucks County and member of the provincial assembly of Pennsylvania. "He soon rose to eminence in the arts and sciences and attained a high degree of knowledge and skill in mechanical pursuits and was the friend and companion of Rittenhouse and Franklin."

The family history records that "in 1769 Joseph Ellicott constructed his musical clock, assisted by his eldest son, Andrew [afterwards called Andrew 'the astronomer,'] who was then in his fifteenth year. Joseph Sr. was evidently original in the conception of this clock, though he had observed the business of clock making while in England. One of the relatives whom he visited was John Ellicott, clock-maker in the Royal Exchange, London. However, the musical clock was essentially different from any other, either in Europe or America. The case of mahogany is a four-sided column, about eight feet high. On the capital of this case is the clock with four faces. It is designed to stand in the center of a room. On one face is represented the sun, moon, earth, and other planets all moving in their orbits as they do in the heavens. On another face are marked seconds, minutes, hours, days, months and years; the years representing one century. On the third face are marked the names of twenty-four musical tunes, being favorite ones of the time before the American Revolution. In the center of this face is a pointer, which being placed against any named tune, repeats it. The smaller cylinder plays a tune each hour and the larger one every three hours. Through the glass of the fourth face may be seen the curious mechanism of the clock."



CHAPTER II

MOVING TO MARYLAND.

In 1775 war clouds had gathered in New England and Virginia and the second Continental Congress met on May 10th in Philadelphia.

The year was memorable in the history of the Joseph Ellicott family. The eldest son, Andrew, "the astronomer," was married to Sarah Brown, of Bucks County, Penna. He had just attained his majority when he made his fortunate and happy alliance with this admirable young lady. Andrew's younger brother and pupil, Joseph Jr., aged fifteen, was boyishly eager to see the world. Of course, he had visited Philadelphia, "The great city which William Penn founded on the banks of the Delaware," and had looked with the wondering eyes of a country boy on the broad river, the ships and the grave gentlemen in straight-collared coats and broad-brimmed beaver hats, but he longed to go farther afield. Now his wish was realized, for all the family moved to Maryland in the month of December, accompanied by two of the elder Joseph's brothers, Andrew IV and John and the six children of their deceased friend William Evans. Mill sites had been purchased, some time before this migration, on the Patapsco River, about ten miles from Baltimore. The Ellicott brothers had traveled on horseback over the middle counties of Maryland and had decided on two mill sites because of the good wheat land which lies between the river and the Blue Ridge Mountains. In fact *Ellicott's Lower Mills*, now called Ellicott City, was founded by John and Andrew IV, sons of Andrew and Ann Bye Ellicott and brothers of Joseph Sr., as early as 1772 and were ready for business in 1774, according to the account of the "Settlement Of

Ellicott's Mills" by Martha E. Tyson, a grand-daughter of Andrew IV. She was an interesting writer and speaker and an acceptable minister in the Society Of Friends.

The emigration was a great and joyous adventure for Joseph Jr. and the younger children of the Ellicott and Evans families. C. W. Evans, the family historian, describes the exodus: "The emigration from Pennsylvania to Maryland was attended by many cares and anxieties, but the brothers Ellicott, Joseph Senior and his brothers Andrew IV and John, were men in the prime of life, of sound judgment and foresight, seeming to see the end from the beginning, never faltered in their enterprise.

"The wagons, carts, wheelbarrows, and hand-barrows, and all their mechanical and agricultural implements, with the household goods for the families of their workmen, and the draft horses necessary for the work they were about to commence were put on board a vessel at the port of Philadelphia, and taken down the Delaware to New Castle, and there landed.

"The wagons and carts were then loaded with the articles brought down in the vessel and driven across the peninsula to the head of Elk, where they were again embarked on a vessel which lay waiting for them, and which sailing along Chesapeake Bay to Patapsco River proceeded up the stream to Elkridge Landing. At this point the Ellicotts finally discharged their cargo; the wagons and carts were reloaded, and, passing over a narrow, rough country road to within *one mile of their destination*, were obliged to stop on account of the precipices and rocks, which made their way to the site of what was afterwards Ellicott's Mills, impassable. (The women and children proceeded slowly on horseback.)

"The wagons and carts were unloaded and their contents carried by parties of men, on hand-barrows, to the end of the journey; the same men taking the wagons and carts to pieces, carried them in detached portions to their destination."

Some buildings were already on the site of the Upper Mills. This property contained 157 acres of land and was conveyed to Joseph Ellicott, Andrew Ellicott, John Ellicott, Nathaniel Ellicott and their half brother, George Wall, Jr., by James Hood.

"All the members of the Ellicott family who adopted Maryland as their home belonged to the Society of Friends. They were warmly welcomed by the Friends of Elkridge Meeting and were faithful in attendance of Meetings. Being Quakers, they could not conscientiously take sides in the Revolutionary struggle, but unlike some of their faith, all their sympathies were with the Colonists. Nathaniel and John Ellicott lost their right of membership in the Society of Friends by taking part in military movements.

"The first dwelling built by the Ellicotts was a large house made of logs on the east side of the river for their mechanics and laborers who had come on from Pennsylvania," writes Martha E. Tyson. "It contained many apartments and was a boarding house for them and their wives and children till other houses were built. The mill built by James Hood was torn down and Joseph Ellicott Sr. built another one on its site with all the latest inventions and improvements made by him, the finest practical genius of the brothers."

The Upper Mills property was more valuable than the Lower Mills at that time because a highway from Baltimore to Frederick passed by it. A large store was built and carried on in connection with the milling business. After the construction of a new road which passed the Lower Mills they became more valuable. When the property was divided the Upper Mills were assigned to Joseph Ellicott, Sr.

He built a beautiful mansion at the Upper Mills and laid out extensive gardens in which were fish ponds and a constant flowing fountain throwing the water ten feet high. Water was piped to the house and garden from an unfailing spring on high land west of the mansion. A round clock was placed in the gable end of the

house fronting the road. The musical clock was in the large hall.

C. W. Evans describes the location of the different buildings as follows, "The house is situated on the north side of the road, and west of the Patapsco Falls. The mills and store were between the falls and the house. The store was commenced about the year 1775, and the goods for it were purchased in New York and Philadelphia and were shipped to Elkridge Landing and then conveyed to the Upper Mills; they were fine dry goods, silks, satins, and brocades; also groceries and other articles of trade. Ladies from Baltimore often took the trouble to ride out, some eleven miles, to make their selections of choice articles, and considered themselves well repaid for so doing. It was also much patronized by the people for miles around.

"The mills erected by the Ellicott brothers were brought to perfection and they soon became known as the greatest manufacturers of flour in Maryland."

The Ellicott purchase embraced the land on both sides of the Patapsco for four miles and included all the water power within that distance. They raised wheat on their land and soon proved that it was more profitable than tobacco. The chief "concerns" of the Ellicotts, aside from milling, seemed to be making good roads and wharves and building a Friends' Meeting House and several school houses at their own expense: The youthful Ellicotts and Evans had all the educational advantages of their day. The eldest of the sons of Joseph and Judith Ellicott, called Andrew "The Astronomer," tutored his brothers David, Joseph and Benjamin in surveying and higher mathematics. And Joseph worked on the farm and in the mill, for he was vigorous and healthy and enjoyed work as well as play immensely. In that early day the whole valley was a great wilderness covered with great trees, the growth of centuries—oaks, hickory, maple, gum, ash, chestnut and other varieties common to the climate of Maryland. In the midst of this forest on the level ground were the

dogwood, red bud, spice wood, prickly-ash, alder, elder and other shrubs clustered so thickly together that it was often necessary for fifteen year old Joseph, a well grown sturdy lad, to cut a path for the younger children when they went on their frequent expeditions to the rocking-stone on Wildcat branch, where they enjoyed many a game of see-saw on the wonderfully balanced rock as they rested from berry picking. This wonderful stone was blasted out in 1829 when the railroad was completed. The close undergrowth sheltered much small game and young Joseph loved the forest and was an excellent woodsman and hunter for his age. Deer and wild turkeys were also plentiful in those days.

The twins, Benjamin and Rachel, were their brother Joseph's especial favorites among all the Ellicott and Evans youngsters. The big efficient boy would do anything to please this little brother and sister.

Social life was not lacking with so many young people at the Mills, and numerous festivities were enjoyed. And twice a week all the Ellicotts and Evanses attended Friends' Meeting at Elkridge. The Friends of the neighborhood were the Pierponts, the Haywards, Reads and others. The Joseph Ellicott mansion was famous for its gracious hospitality, and was the scene of many family pleasures and reunions. Its furnishings were tasteful. The plates and other dishes used on the dining-table were of hard metal kept almost as bright as silver. They were the same bought by Joseph in London, and were marked with the monogram of the master and mistress "J. J. E." The most valuable article of furniture was the musical clock.

Charles W. Evans, the family historian, wrote concerning the marriages of the Evans and Ellicott young people: "When Joseph and Judith Ellicott removed from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, to Ellicott's Upper Mills, in Maryland in 1775, and brought with them their nine children, and the six orphan children of their deceased friend, William Evans, they did not appear to have

thought of the consequences of taking Evans' boys with them. They had not lived in their new home two years before love affairs transpired. Their son David married Martha Evans in 1777, their daughter Ann married Joseph Evans the same year. About that time John Evans won the affection of their daughter Letitia. She was very young, but very determined. Tradition states that her parents at first thought of refusing their consent, but they finally concluded to give them a large wedding party, the first one in their new house. So John and Letitia were married early in 1778, he being nineteen and she only fifteen, and thus they became the ancestors of the Evans family of Buffalo, N. Y. Rachel, another daughter of Joseph and Judith and twin sister of Benjamin, married Lewis Evans in 1787. There are few instances of so many intermarriages between two families. Their descendants are mostly in Western New York and are very numerous."

The romantic atmosphere which surrounded them apparently had no influence on Joseph junior and Benjamin except perhaps, to strengthen their brotherly love, which was great enough and unselfish enough to stand the test of a close companionship in the same home for many years. After the marriage of his adored twin sister, Benjamin seemed more than ever attached to his brother Joseph.

The years passed swiftly by and the daughters went away to homes of their own with the exception of Sarah who died in 1779 unmarried. Hers was the first death in the Joseph Ellicott family. The next year, 1780, the dearly loved father died and was laid beside Sarah in the family burial ground on the hill southwest of the mansion. He was a remarkable man who had accomplished much in the short span of forty-eight years.

Judith Ellicott continued to live in the mansion at the Upper Mills. Her son, Andrew, moved to Baltimore, but David and his family settled near her. Joseph went to Baltimore where he taught school for a time but in 1785 he found his true vocation when he assisted

his brother Andrew in locating the western boundary of the State of Pennsylvania. They used instruments of their own make and their brother Benjamin's. Joseph was then twenty five years of age. Andrew had already established the boundary line between Pennsylvania and Virginia through an almost uninhabited country, and had received the honorary degree of Master of Arts from William and Mary College, and although a "birthright Friend" he had, sometime before, accepted a commission from the Governor of Maryland as Major in the Elk River Battalion of the Maryland militia. Andrew's wife, Sarah Brown Ellicott, was the daughter of a prominent Friend and a cousin of Jacob Brown, the "Fighting Quaker" of the War of 1812. That Andrew had accepted the commission as Major is not the only thing that proves that while respecting Quaker principles he was not in entire sympathy with their outward manifestations. He never used the "plain language" after 1786 or thereabouts. That year he attended a Quarterly Meeting and wrote concerning it, "Our meditations were only interrupted once. Mine turned upon that easy sum for the Quadrature of a Circle." Naively implying that the interruption was to him a hindrance to mathematical reflection instead of an aid to spiritual meditation. *However, one of Andrew's letters from the wilderness to his wife in 1784 reads as follows:

"Dear Sally:—As my health is thy first concern, I have the pleasure of informing thee of my good State at present. I am as hearty or more so than ever, but I do not like this country. I shall write a long letter in the course of a few days.

"I saw Abraham Doan and his sister Hetty brought to Gaol, with two other Robbers. They have committed notorious acts of villany on the Frontier, One of their company was killed in robbing a house in this neighborhood . . . [The Doanes were a noted family of outlaws at the time of the revolution.] With the greatest esteem, thy Loving Husband,
"Andrew."

* "Life and Letters of Andrew Ellicott."

In 1786 Andrew Ellicott represented the City of Baltimore in the Maryland Legislature and was elected to the Maryland Philosophical Society of which Benjamin Franklin was President. Andrew E. wrote many valuable scientific papers for the society. In 1789 he moved to Philadelphia. That year he and his brothers Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott undertook to survey the western boundary line of New York adjoining Pennsylvania, it being necessary to determine whether Presqu' Isle, now the city of Erie, was in the former or latter state. Phelps and Gorham had purchased of Massachusetts the preemption claim to Western New York and wished to secure another port on Lake Erie while Pennsylvania, very naturally, wanted at least one Great Lakes Port.

In an article written for the Buffalo Historical Society and published in Volume XXVI, Dr. G. Hunter Bartlett gives an amusing account of the way the Ellicott brothers and their helpers were treated by Lieut. Col. Harriss, Commandant at Fort Niagara, which the British still held. Col. Harriss ordered the Americans to leave the country at once. Andrew stated that it would be necessary to go within the British territory to begin the work because the point which limits the State of New York to the westward lies within the British settlements on the west end of Lake Ontario. Dr. Bartlett writes—"President Washington had asked permission from Lord Dorchester, the Governor General of Canada, for the expedition and his request had gone by special messenger, but when the little expedition, Andrew, Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott and their helpers, with General Chapin of Massachusetts and Frederick Sexton, a representative of Phelps and Gorham, arrived at Fort Niagara on October 21, 1789, the Commandant refused to recognize the official commission so far as to permit it to stay in the country to await the arrival of the express sent to the Governor of Canada, or even long enough to visit the falls. He said, 'Too many people have seen the falls already.' He ordered them

to leave forthwith by the nearest route to the 'Genecies.' However, it is pleasant to record that before the party had gone 100 miles Lord Dorchester's permission was received to execute any part of their business which might fall within His Majesty's territory, and thereafter they were treated with politeness and attention. The result of the survey placed Erie in Pennsylvania. At this time too the Ellicott brothers made the first actual measurements of the entire length of the Niagara and of the falls and rapids."

Then came the work in the District of Columbia and the survey for the city of Washington in which Joseph and Benjamin assisted their brother Andrew Ellicott, Surveyor General of the United States.

On March 26, 1791, the *Gazette of the United States* announced that "Mr. Ellicott and Major L. Enfant are now engaged in laying out the ground on the Potomac on which the Federal buildings are to be erected." The plan of Washington City was made by the talented but temperamental Frenchman, Major L. Enfant (Longfong) who had served gallantly in the Revolution. It was submitted to President Washington but did not meet with his unqualified approval. As he refused to make the changes suggested by the chief executive and Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, and would not allow his plan to be used when much needed by the 'Commission' in the sale of lots, L. Enfant was dismissed in March 1792 and took his original manuscript plan away with him. Then Andrew Ellicott redrew the entire plan, retaining as far as possible, L. Enfant's ideas while making the desired changes. And he added with Washington's approval many ideas of his own.

"Andrew Ellicott left the final details of the work to his brothers Joseph and Benjamin, who had assisted him from the first."

In 1791 Joseph Ellicott was appointed to run the boundary line between Georgia and the Creek Indians

and accomplished the work satisfactorily but nearly lost his life in the fever infested country, as he was terribly ill with "Yellow Jack."

The family history relates that in 1796 "Joseph Ellicott and his brothers disposed of some wild land which they owned, receiving merchandise in exchange. With this stock of goods they replenished the store at their paternal home, "Ellicott's Upper Mills," which had been and continued to be in the possession of their mother, Judith Ellicott. They appropriated the profits of the business to the improvement of the property, which then received the legal name of "Fountainville." Joseph was engaged for only a short time in this business with his brothers; for the next year he was employed by the Holland Land Company and made his home with his brother Andrew and family at 16 North Sixth Street when in Philadelphia. Probably this was one of the happiest periods of Joseph's life as he was one of an affectionate, cultured, cheerful household to whose master, mistress and children he was devoted. Andrew Ellicott was ever lover as well as husband and his was a happy home.





CHAPTER III.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT PREPARES TO CONQUER A WILDERNESS.

Late in the summer of 1797 Joseph Ellicott came from Philadelphia to Geneseo to attend a treaty with the Indians; the lands west of the Genesee River had been purchased by Robert Morris, financial savior of our country in the Revolution and signer of the Declaration of Independence, to whose memory the ancient Land Office at Batavia is dedicated. The treaty by which the Seneca Indians signed away their right to this region was concluded in September 1797; the lands were at once sold by Morris to Dutch capitalists of Amsterdam, Holland, known in this country as the Holland Land Company. Joseph Ellicott was appointed Chief of Survey. Formerly he had been employed by the Company in the survey of their Pennsylvania lands. Ellicott did not return to Philadelphia until after the signing of the treaty, in the meantime having accomplished much preliminary work for the great survey. He went on horseback the same way he came, by Tioga Point and Wilkes-Barre.

In a letter to Theophilus Cazenove, general agent of the Company, Ellicott gives a full and methodical account of his preparatory work, using many capital letters as was customary at that time. This letter may be found in the Historical Library of Buffalo.

"TO THEOPHILUS CAZENOVE, ESQUIRE,

"Dear Sir:—I herewith beg leave to lay before you, an account of my proceedings, in respect to certain objects performed pursuant to your Instructions dated at Philadelphia the 25th day of July, 1797. It is therein mentioned that I was to leave the City of Philadelphia about the beginning of August and arrive in due time at Connawauga or any other place where Mr. Robert Morris or his Attorney would be to treat with the Seneca Tribe of Indians for the sale of their Lands, and for other purposes therein mentioned. I accordingly left the City of Philadelphia on the 10th day of the month aforesaid in company with Mr. R. Van Staphorst and Mr. James Rees and arrived at Bigtree on the Geneseo River the 26th following, being the place where Mr. Robert Morris's Attornies, Mr. Thomas Morris and Mr. Charles Williamson, were preparing to hold a Treaty with the Seneca Tribe of Indians for the purpose aforesaid; and at that place I remained attending (to the best of my abilities) to the object of my mission until the Attornies of Mr. Robert Morris had effected the purchase of all the Lands lying westward of the Geneseo River within the Massachusetts Preemption and claimed by the Seneca Nation of Indians excepting certain reserves amounting to about Two hundred thousand Acres and of which you have been made fully acquainted.

"After the signing of the Indian Deed took place and the whole of the business being finished as far as respected the Indians, on consulting Major Hoops, Mr. Robert Morris's Surveyor, we conceived there would be a sufficient time before cold weather would set in to make a Traverse of that part of the Shore of Lake Ontario that bounds the Late Purchase on the North, the Straights of Niagara and the Shores of Lake Erie West and North west, being of the opinion that if that survey was effected that it would greatly facilitate the liberation of the several Tracts belonging to the Holland Land Company at an early period the next season.

"I accordingly mentioned our conference to Messieurs Bayard and Gerritt Boon who requested me to furnish them with an Estimate of the probable amount of the Immediate expense that would attend the prosecution of the survey. And they agreed to leave in the hands of Mr. Thad. Chapin at Canandaigua a sum equal to the said Estimate, which was accordingly done.

"Things being thus far settled there remains for us to procure Necessary Camp Equipage, Stores and hands to prosecute the Survey which was Effected and the whole conveyed to the N. West corner of Messers. Gorham and Phelps' Purchase (that place being the N. East corner of the State purchase) on the shore of Lake Ontario, by the 3rd day of the Month of October following. And here I beg to leave to refer you the Field Book containing a Survey (carefully made) of the courses and distances along that part of the shore of Lake Ontario, the Straights of Niagara and the shore of Lake Erie that bounds the purchase aforesaid, which completed the main part of the object we had in View; and from the said Survey and those previously made the General Draft that accompanied the Field Book was taken and which will show to as great a degree of certainty as the present stage of the business will admit the relative situation of the several Tracts sold by Mr. Robert Morris to the Holland Land Company and their Interferances with lands claimed by others together with nearly the precise number of acres contained in the two Tracts B, C.

"After finishing the survey before mentioned I repaired with all convenient speed to Canandaigua and at which place I arrived on the 18th day of November when I received two letters from you containing further Instructions, one dated on the 6th day of October and the other the 16th following. The latter Instructed me to ascertain the quantity of Provisions and stores that would be required to Effect the Object aforesaid.

"I then wrote circular letters to such persons as from the best information I could obtain would be the

most likely to be punctual in case they should think proper to make a contract for the supply of provisions (a copy of which letter is also herewith presented to you marked B.) and received written proposals from only two of them that is to say Mr. Thomas Morris and Mr. Thadeus Chapin; but both of them Men that confidence may be placed in for their integrity and punctuality. The proposition of Mr. Chapin I herewith present marked C. as also the Contract entered into with Mr. Morris marked D. Immediately after receiving proposals I proceeded with all convenient dispatch to Mr. Gerritt Boon's Settlement near Fort Schuyler to confer with Mr. Boon respecting those Gentlemen's proposals and at whose seat I arrived on the 4th day of December and presented the proposals to Mr. Boon and after deliberating on the propositions from several circumstances we concluded that Mr. Thomas Morris ought to have the preference and in consequence of the season being at hand for putting up provisions we were of the opinion that we could not without Injury wait until I could travel to the City of New York or Philadelphia as the case might require to lay their proposals before you as neither of the Contracts [contractors] would undertake to put up provisions to that amount if the Contract was not Immediately entered into.

"From the foregoing statement I shall endeavor to place in a concise point of View the business that hath been actually performed during the last season.

"First:— that the whole of the Land belonging to the Holland Land Company situated in the Massachusetts Preemption was Liberated from the Indian claim excepting about 132,260 Acres in the Month of September last.

"Second:— that a survey hath been carefully made along the shore of Lake Ontario, the Straits of Niagara and that part of the shore of Lake Erie that Bounds the late purchase.

“Third:— That a Typegraphical Map hath been made out by Means of that Survey showing the boundary line of the late purchase, and in which is designated the several purchases Made by the Dutch Company of Robert Morris Esquire, also showing their Interferences with other Tracts, purchased by other persons and companies.

“Fourth:— That a contract has been entered into with the Honorable Thomas Morris Esquire for the supply of one Hundred Barrels of Pork, Fifteen Barrels of Beef and Two Hundred and Seventy Barrels of Flour, to be delivered at Big Tree, Connawaugus or Ierundegut [early spelling of Irondequoit] Landing, near Lake Ontario.

“Fifth:— That the deputy surveyors are engaged to assist in laying off the whole of the Holland Company's Lands (into Towns of Six Miles Square) Situate in the Massachusetts Geneseo Preemption, during the season of 1798.

“You are now acquainted with the present state of the business as far as it has progressed. It now remains for me to point out to you what will be required to be performed during the present season, to complete these great Surveys upon the principles of the Instructions contained in your letter of the sixth of October last.

“First—the boundary lines of the several Tracts purchased by the Holland Company of Mr. Robert Morris is required to be ascertained agreeable to the several contracts.

“Second—the whole of the lands contained in several Tracts (except such parts as may fall on Indian Reservations) is required to be accurately surveyed and laid out into Towns or Townships of six Miles square with Maps of each Town or Township Accompanied

with Field Books description of the Lands, Waters, Hills, Plains, Valleys, Mines, Minerals, etc., AND

“Thirdly, the Boundary lines of the several Indian Reservations are required to be Ascertained agreeably to the Articles of the Treaty held at Big Tree on the Genesee River in the month of September last.

“I conceive it is necessary for me to observe that to accomplish the whole of this Immence business in one season makes it indispensibly necessary to commence our Operations Early in the spring as the weather will possibly admit. And further that the business when finally done shall be executed in such a Manner that there never can Justly arise any disput between the Holland Land Company and persons who may have lands adjoining any of their Tracts.

“The several Tracts that are to be laid off to the aforesaid Company being bounded in part by Meridian lines, ought to be ascertained and Run with Transit Instruments, there being no other Instrument by which a meridian line can be run the distance that is necessary. Hence we shall be under the necessity of having one or two instruments of this kind Constructed there being only one portable one in the United States and that belongs to Andrew Ellicott, Esquire, who has it with him at the Natchez for Astronomical purposes. Having given you the Outlines of the business to be performed in the next place it will be proper to make an Estimate of the Stores yet to be procured and other Articles that will be wanted to carry the whole into Complete Effect.” [Joseph Ellicott]

Nothing could more clearly disclose some of the many sterling traits of the writer's mind and character than the above letter.

On his journey eastward Ellicott walked as far as Canandaigua and of course was much fatigued.

Approval of Ellicott's work was expressed by General Agent Cazenove in a letter dated May, 1798:—

“The execution of these several surveys is with great confidence intrusted to you, Dear Sir: That confidence is the result of your former exertions on behalf of a company which has received so many proofs of your talents, integrity, prudence and activity. The managers of the Holland Land Company, by a letter dated Amsterdam 30th January, do not only approve of the preliminary disposition made last fall, but they express their satisfaction of your having undertaken the direction of the great survey of their Genesee lands (a territory greater in extent than the Kingdom of Holland.)

The Holland Company does rely again upon your fidelity and zeal: I am authorized to contract with you on her behalf and the content of the present letter is the result of the instructions I have received.”



CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLLAND PURCHASE FROM 1798 TO 1800

Again Mr. Ellicott left Philadelphia for Western New York, this time in May, 1798, accompanied by his brother Benjamin and Ebenezer Cary. They came on horseback and stopped for some time at Canandaigua, then continued the journey by way of Avon and to Buffalo Creek by the old Indian Trail which passes through Batavia. Surveyors Smedley and Egleston had established headquarters at the log house of a Dutch fur trader named Winne on the bank of Little Buffalo Creek. Winne moved out to make room for them, taking with him the boards in the partition; when boards were scarce and much needed to make a mapping table for the surveyors. On their arrival Mr. Ellicott and his party made their headquarters at Palmer's Tavern, which was a two-story hewed log house, owned by the half-breed Captain William Johnston, near where Exchange Street is now, about eight rods west of Main Street. This is said to have been the first tavern in Buffalo and later on the same spot was Crow's Tavern and afterward the Mansion House, long a landmark of Exchange Street.

Some idea of the generalship required for the work of surveying is given in Mr. Ellicott's letter to General Agent Cazenove just quoted, but many other supplies such as instruments used in surveying, compasses, chains, etc., tents, dishes, blankets, were ordered. The instruments came from Potts and Rittenhouse, mathematical and astronomical instrument makers, of Philadelphia.

Clarence Cummings writes: "Joseph Ellicott was assisted in the work of preparation by Thomas Morris

who was given the contract to furnish supplies, and Augustus Porter who procured horses and assistants to transport the assembled stores of goods to various points in Western New York. Adam Hoops Junior was sent to the scene of work to attend to details for beginning the great task of surveying the land.

"The surveyors gathered in Philadelphia and the parties left there in April, 1798, taking different routes to the scene of their work. The head surveyors engaged for the first season were the three brothers, Joseph, David and Benjamin Ellicott, and Richard M. Stoddard, who became the first sheriff of Genesee County when it was all of New York west of the Genesee River. The other head surveyors were George Bergess, Augustus Porter, James Dewey, Aaron Oakfield Jr., John Thompson, Seth Pease, James Smedley, William Shepherd and George Egleston. Also two Frenchmen who were employed for a short time in trying to find a practical route for a canal around Niagara Falls on the east side of the river. They soon gave up the attempt. James Brisbane, then in his minority, came from Philadelphia with Mr. Thompson as clerk and storekeeper. These head surveyors were assisted by one hundred and twenty helpers, with vast supplies of food, pack-horses, tents, saws, axes and other implements and surveying instruments including a transit instrument made by Benjamin Ellicott, 'transit engineer,' as Joseph proudly designated his younger brother.

"The deer were startled from their hiding places, the wolves were driven from their lairs by white men with compasses, chains and flags; the Red Men looked on sullenly."

The work was as carefully planned as were the Byrd expeditions to Antarctica more than one hundred and thirty years later.

In a letter to Augustus Porter Mr. Ellicott directs that "supplies of food be sent from the mouth of Genesee River, where they were landed, to Queenston (called

West Landing) on the Niagara River to be kept in some of the storehouses at 'Sloser', as doubtless Major Revarde, commandant at Fort Niagara, would grant them permission to use the old storehouses: that a party with a boat be sent to the mouth of Chautauqua Creek to build a storehouse and open the old trail to Lake Chautauqua wide enough for a wagon with a Mohawk boat to pass."

He writes: "I should be glad if you could get us twenty horses at seventy dollars each, the price allowed by the Dutch agent. We will take the remainder of the horses from here (Philadelphia). And get twenty good pack saddles, girths, etc. Surveyors from here and from the eastern states will take their own hands with them. You will therefore please to engage forty for the present, but part of them will not be wanted until the last of May. The price allowed per month is fifteen dollars I wish the old tents, blankets, and camp equipage of last year would answer until those on the way could be had.

"The whole business respecting surveying these lands and laying out the Indian Reservations is entrusted to me with ample funds placed in my hands for carrying the same into effect."

Joseph Ellicott was virtually the Patroon of the Holland Purchase for over twenty years and showed great executive ability in his wise and just management.

A few words regarding the so-called Holland Land Company may not be out of place at this point: yet legally there never was such a company. In 1792 business men of the city of Amsterdam, Holland, placed funds in the hands of friends who were citizens of the United States to purchase several tracts of land in their own names. Early in 1798 the Legislature of New York authorized those aliens to hold land within the State, and the latter part of the year the American trustees conveyed the Holland Purchase to the real owners; but it was deeded to the individuals as there was no incorporated or legal company. All deeds were made in the name of the individual proprietor, for ex-

ample: "Wilhelm Willink, Nicholas Van Staphorst, Pieter Van Eghen, Hendrick Vollenhoven, Rutger Jan Schimmelpennick, etal. by their agent Joseph Ellicott." The whole tract except thirty thousand acres was conveyed to the five Hollanders just mentioned, and the thirty thousand acres were conveyed to Wilhelm Willink, Jr., and Jan Willink, Jr. Two years later the five owners of the main tract transferred the title of about a million acres, so that it was vested in the original five, and also in Wilhelm Willink, Jr., and Jan Willink, Jr., Jan Gabriel Van Staphorst, Roelif Van Staphorst, Jr., Cornelius Vollenhoven, Hendrick Seye and Pieter Stavmitzky. These same men also owned land in central New York and Pennsylvania.

Theophilus Cazenove, the first General Agent of the Hollanders, was in charge from 1797 to 1799, and was succeeded by Paul Busti who continued as general agent for the owners until 1824. Joseph Ellicott was local agent in western New York from 1800 to 1821.

Among Mr. Ellicott's letters of 1798 is one telling of a new town laid out opposite Queenston or West Landing. East Landing, now Lewiston, had long been an important point on the Niagara Frontier, and was doubtless expected to be the chief city of Western New York, so the beautiful place was laid out on generous lines with magnificent streets, long and wide.

Mr. Ellicott writes: "The town as it is laid out now will be a most convenient ground in that part of the country in regard to its commercial position and salubrity. It rises gradually to the east and falling imperceptibly in the northeast corner will make it airy and add much to render it wholesome."

Under French influence Chabert Joncaire, a Frenchman by birth, a Seneca by adoption, had built a block house of heavy logs at the foot of Lewiston Heights close to the river, in order to protect the portage, as early as 1720. Joncaire, Sr., died in 1739, and his son Chabert Joncaire, Jr., succeeded his father and was placed by the French in charge of transportation on

the old Indian trail from Lewiston Dock to the upper river.

When the surveyors arrived at Buffalo Creek in 1798 there were four or five log buildings in place. The leading man there was William Johnston, son of Captain John Johnston, an interpreter in the British Department of Indian Affairs. As his mother was a Seneca woman he was regarded by the Indians as one of themselves. William Johnston served the British government as resident agent and interpreter at Buffalo Creek from 1787 to 1796, when the English jurisdiction ended on the frontier. But instead of leaving with the other British officers, he chose to stay with his Indian relatives. He was greatly esteemed by the early white inhabitants, as well as by the Indians. Captain William Johnston owned a great deal of land near the mouth of Buffalo Creek which he had received as a gift from the Indians, including a large part of the site of the present city of Buffalo. He had an agreement with the Indians to operate a certain sawmill owned by himself on condition of supplying them with all the boards and planks they wanted for building. As the Dutch company's land was cut off from the east end of Lake Erie by Johnston's land, which could be easily annexed to the Indian Reservation, and by the mile strip owned by the state of New York, Mr. Ellicott was authorized to buy at least the high land north of Buffalo Creek. He seemed to realize the necessity of having a frontage on the east end of Lake Erie far more keenly than Mr. Cazenove, the general agent. Also there was a possibility of the state competing with the Holland Company, which was perfectly evident to the astute Ellicott.

Turner in his *History of the Holland Purchase* writes: "Although Johnston's title to this land was not considered to have the least validity, yet the Indians had the power and the inclination to include it within their reservation, unless a compromise were made with Johnston, and taking into consideration his influence with them Ellicott concluded to enter into the follow-

ing agreement with him which was afterwards fully complied with and conformed by both of the parties:—Johnston agreed to surrender his right to two square miles, and use his influence with the Indians to have that tract and his mill site left out of their reservation, in consideration of which the Holland Land Company agreed to convey by deed to said Johnston, six hundred and forty acres, including the said mill site and adjacent timber land; together with forty-five and a half acres, being part of said two square miles, including the buildings and improvements, then owned by Johnston, four acres of which was to be on the 'point.' ” This transfer made Johnston the first land owner by deed of the Holland Land Company in what became the city of Buffalo.

Mr. Ellicott, ever fond of young people, alludes in a letter to young Mr. Van Staphorst as “a pleasant companion and one of our family since his arrival in this part of the new territory.” This young man appears to be the only representative of the Holland Land Company proprietors who visited Western New York except paid employees.

James Locke Babcock in his admirable work “Joseph Ellicott, Founder of Buffalo” proves by Ellicott’s letters that Main Street was opened during the summer of 1798, however, the survey of New Amsterdam (Buffalo) was not finished until several years later: one reason being that it was expected that the State would offer for sale their land adjoining the village and that the price would be more than the Dutch company would be willing to pay. It was not until the twentieth of September, 1804, that Mr. Ellicott offered the plan of Buffalo to Paul Busti of Philadelphia and received a reply dated October 24, 1804, expressing his approval of the plan. Busti wrote: “As the State was determined to lay in town lots the ground extending to the Ferry (Black Rock) we cannot with propriety say that no alterations should take place in our prices and conditions. It is of the utmost importance that New

Amsterdam should maintain its superiority above the new intended town. On this score I repeat to you the recommendations I made you formerly . . . be at Albany or send there some trusty to assist at the Vendue [auction] in order to secure the company such lots as may be advantageous to include in our town." "There is no doubt whatever that Joseph Ellicott originated and drew the plans, surveyed the village and fixed prices and began the survey of lots in New Amsterdam," writes J. L. Babcock.

Some opposition was encountered in surveying the Indian reservations from people in Canada who persuaded the chiefs not to yield the land at the east end of Lake Erie, and also from Corn Planter (John O'bail or Abell) one of the head chiefs of the Six Nations and the rival of the orator Red Jacket. Corn Planter was the son of John Abell, a Dutch fur trader, and a Seneca woman, and the prophet Handsome Lake and Chief Black Snake were his half brothers. He was born at Cannawagus (Avon).

* "The Indian Reservations were: Cannawagus, located on the west bank of the Genesee River west of Avon; Little Beards and Big Tree Reservations, which together included four square miles on the west bank of the Genesee opposite Geneseo; Squawkie Hill Reservation on the north bank of the Genesee north of Mount Morris; and Gardeau, the reservation given by the Indians to Mary Jemison, the 'White Woman of the Genesee'; it lay on both sides of the Genesee River two or three miles south of Mount Morris, and contained twenty-eight square miles; the Caneadea Reservation of sixteen square miles on both sides of the Genesee and extending eight miles along the river in the county of Allegheny; the Oil Spring Reservation of one square mile on the line between Allegheny and Cattaraugus Counties; the Allegheny Reservation lying on each side of the Allegheny River from the Pennsylvania line for about twenty-five miles; the Cattaraugus

* "The Genesee Country" Lockwood R. Doty.

Reservation each side and near the mouth of Cattaraugus Creek on Lake Erie; the Buffalo Reservation of one hundred and thirty square miles lying on both sides of Buffalo Creek and extending from Lake Erie about seven miles wide. The Tonawanda Reservation, seventy square miles lying on both sides of Tonawanda Creek, beginning about twenty-five miles from its mouth and extending eastwardly about seven miles wide; the Tuscarora Reservation of one square mile located about three miles east of Lewiston on the Mountain Ridge."

Corn Planter at first influenced the Indians to disregard the terms of the treaty in the Allegheny section but Ellicott with his usual finesse and adroitness visited the chief accompanied by a noted sachem, Farmer's Brother, who told Corn Planter that the Indians would surely receive their annuity and must live up to the terms of the Big Tree Treaty. This firm stand of Ellicott forced Corn Planter to permit the survey of Allegheny Reservation.

In his report for 1798 Ellicott described his work and writes of the importance which he places in land about Buffalo Creek as a place "designed by nature for the grand emporium of the western world. I mean the mouth of Buffalo Creek and the country contiguous thereto."

Ellicott's first business in 1798 had been to find and correctly establish the east line of the purchase. He knew that variations of the magnetic needle made it difficult if not impossible to run a true meridian by the surveyor's compass; but his brother Benjamin had originated the idea of an instrument, similar to those used to measure the transit of the heavenly bodies, which had no magnetic needle attached. The advantages of this were that by means of its telescopic tube and accurate manner of reversing, a straight line could be accurately run. So under Benjamin Ellicott's supervision the firm of Rittenhouse and Potts constructed the instrument. In order to make use of it, the surveyors cleared a space about four rods wide so as to give

an uninterrupted view of the heavens—a giant task in a heavily wooded country; but “the survey when finished was a work well done for all time.”

“The whole company of surveyors was divided into parties and the requisite number of hands undertook to run the eastern boundary line. The others were assigned to run different township lines. Pack horses moved the camps and supplies from camp to camp. Provisions were bountifully supplied by the Holland Land Company, and game and fish were all around them, and we may well envy the good digestion which must have waited on appetites when this band of hardy woodmen, sharp-set by open air and exercise, assembled around the open campfire for supper.”

Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott ran the east transit line from the southwest corner of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase and erected a stone monument for the southeast corner of the Holland Purchase.

The inseparable brothers, Joseph and Benjamin, were always together if possible. They had inherited a full share of the family talents. To quote the testimony of Ebenezer Mix, one of their most able assistants in the survey of the Holland Purchase, “They were great scientific engineers.” There was an unusually strong affection between the brothers though they were very unlike in some respects. Besides being a man of science and an accomplished surveyor, Benjamin was artistic, tactful, sweet-tempered and altogether the charming gentleman; but Joseph had the force and initiative to accomplish great things, being strong-willed and rather dictatorial, but withal exceedingly kind and generous. Both were astute and successful in business and strictly honest and dependable. Both were handsome men in their prime, kindly, courteous—to the manner born.

* “In the spring of 1798 when the survey of the Holland Purchase was first undertaken all the travel between Phelps and Gorham Tract and Buffalo Creek

* Doty.

was on the Old Indian Trail; the winter previous however the Legislature passed an act appointing Charles Williamson a commissioner to lay out and open a state road from Cannawagus on the Genesee to Buffalo on Lake Erie and to Lewiston on the Niagara River. To defray the expenses of cutting out these roads the Holland Land Company subscribed five thousand dollars. However, the first wagon track opened on the Holland Purchase was by Mr. Ellicott, as a preliminary step in commencing operations early in the season. He employed a gang of hands to improve the Indian Trail so that wagons could pass upon it from the East Transit Line to Buffalo Creek. Before the close of 1798 the principal station on the east transit was established at what is now Stafford and was known as the Transit Storehouse. The place is about six miles east of the Bend in the Tonawanda Creek (Batavia)."

"Mr. Thompson's party, which had started from Philadelphia early in the spring and came by way of New York, included the young keeper of the stores, surveyor's instruments and camp equipment, James Brisbane. When the batteaux in which they had come from Schenectady arrived at the mouth of the Genesee River the stores were divided, Mr. Thompson proceeding by way of the Niagara River to Buffalo Creek with a part of them designed for use in the western portion of the Purchase, and Mr. Brisbane taking charge of the remainder of them for the eastern portion, carried them over the portage at Genesee Falls, now Rochester, and up the Genesee River to Williamsburg (near Geneseo). Mr. Brisbane moved the supplies to the Transit Storehouse (Stafford) that fall."

Vanderhoof in his "Historical Sketches of Western New York", writes: "It is very easy at this distance of time and in this age of steam and electricity [we may add automobiles and airplanes, telephones and radios] to write about the settlement of a new country, but a lively imagination is hardly equal to drawing the picture of the difficulties encountered by Mr. Ellicott's

surveying party, backed though they were by the solid wealth of a dozen citizens of the Batavian Republic. Every article of supply was rowed, pushed, hauled or pulled in boats up the Mohawk River to Oneida Lake, through the lake into Oswego River and through that river into Lake Ontario. From thence by sail boat to the mouth of the Genesee River, the only part of the journey in which hand labor was not the main motive power. Arrived at the Falls of the Genesee River both boats and cargo had to be carried around and relaunched, and again man power was supplied to move the boats and freight farther up the river. Let us suppose that some necessary article had been omitted in the catalog—left behind or lost by the way. Mr. Ellicott could not step to the telephone and order a duplicate from Buffalo or Rochester, for those cities had no more existence at that time than the telegraph or telephone.”

* “The first crops grown by a white man on the eastern part of the Holland Purchase were at Transit Storehouse. In the spring of 1899 Mr. James Dewey was waiting there with a gang of hands to depart upon a surveying expedition as soon as the weather would permit. At the request of Mr. Brisbane he cleared twenty acres upon either side of the present road twenty rods west of the Transit which was mainly sowed with oats though some potatoes and garden vegetables were planted. The early tavern keeper there—Mr. Walthers—reported by letter to Mr. Ellicott, that the yield was a good one, and fully demonstrated the goodness of the soil of the region he was opening for settlement.”

In the fall of 1798 Ellicott wrote General Agent Cazenove, “I am sorry to inform you that with every exertion I am able to make I am fearful I shall not be able to perform the service I contemplated this season. . . . Agues and fevers broke up one or two surveying parties, and at the same time some distemper raged among our pack horses, and we lost several in a short

* Turner.

space of time; this unfortunate circumstance prevented some of the companies of surveyors from performing their services. I could have wished however that they were recruited both as to Men and Horses as soon as possible and took the field again If we should have a favorable fall so that we can continue in the woods until late in the season I hope we shall have the Surveys in such a forward state that you may be enabled to make your Arrangements for establishing your agent in the fore part of next season. . . . Mr. Van Staphorst writes you a letter enclosed. The remainder of our Household are well, which may be your Situation is my sincere wish, dear sir."

In 1799 Paul Busti having been appointed general agent of the company, Ellicott wrote him from Buffalo Creek a letter dated, "New Amsterdam, July 15, 1799:" The following is a cheering extract: "Our business regarding surveys etc., is progressing with all dispatch although the season is somewhat unfavorable on account of abundance of wet weather. I expect to have six settlers placed on the road before I leave the woods. I have already had a great number of applicants for those situations, and I intend to select such as I conceive the best calculated for the several stands. It is a pleasure, I can add, that myself and all people in the Genesee Purchase in the Company's employ continue in good health, which blessing may you and your family long enjoy." As the foregoing letter indicates, it was thought advisable to establish several places of entertainment for travelers on the tract, and with this end in view Busti authorized Ellicott to locate six such taverns about ten miles apart to be kept by reputable individuals, the company agreeing to sell these tavern keepers land at the lowest price and without interest on their indebtedness. Mr. Ellicott was able to induce three men to locate taverns on the tract; Frederick Walthers near the Transit Storehouse at Stafford, Garrett Davis in what is now Elba, and Asa Ransom at Clarence, then called Ransoms. Before many months

Ellicott made his headquarters at Ransoms, as the headings of his letters show. He often called the place Ransomville and sometimes West Genesee and occasionally Sweet Water Farm.

A vividly interesting letter from Benjamin Ellicott to his brother Joseph describes a tornado on the Allegany River as follows: "Camp twenty-one and one half miles north of the Pennsylvania line, July 29, 1799. While on the south side of the Allegany we have showers almost every day, but after crossing the river no rain fell until the twenty-fifth. I was at the Vista, in order to see if Mr. Cary was cutting in a straight direction at twenty-one and a half miles, (where my camp is at present) thunder sounded from a distance, the clouds ascended and I saw through the instrument the trees bend on the mountains to the north (distance four miles) but soon became obscured. I now prepared to receive it—stripping from a hemlock the bark that had enclosed it for ages, which I placed against an old log, I crept under, when the rain came in torrents, the lightnings flashed, thunder roared incessantly, wind tore from the sturdy trees their boughs and dislocated others that had stood for many years, as if war had been declared against the forest; but at last the lightning ceased to glare, the thunder to sound terrific and the rain to fall in such abundance. I now crept out of my obscure but servicable tenement, and cast my eyes along the avenue to the north saw the mountains smoke with the late deluge, (the avenue on the south side of Allegany River was soon invisible). I returned to camp distance one mile. The surface of the mountains covered with water foaming down in cascade, till it found rest in the valleys below. No part of the world can boast purer air than this place, and there are but few biting insects. The camp is on the top of a high hill or mountain near a good spring."

The surveyors were unable to finish this stupendous task until late in the season of 1799, and it was not until January 2, 1800, that Joseph Ellicott returned to

Philadelphia accompanied by his young friend James Brisbane, his brother Benjamin, Ebenezer Cary and James W. Stevens.

The company had in mind several competent men for the local agency, as Charles Williamson of the Pultney lands, James Wadsworth of Geneseo and Thomas Morris, son of Robert Morris, as well as their own men. Wadsworth's plan submitted in 1796 pleased the company but a number of serious charges against his honesty made by Thomas Morris, with whom he had quarreled, turned the scale against him. Williamson's plan was too expensive; Morris refused to submit a detailed plan and a dispute between his father and the company ended his aspirations. "There remained one man, however, whose plan was excellently conceived, whose integrity and ability were known, and who was backed by the recommendation of the general agent. This man was Joseph Ellicott."

The Dutch proprietors after making a few changes forwarded the plan to Busti in February, 1800, and it was amended by him so that smaller cash payments were demanded, and reductions were made for those who purchased large tracts of lands.



CHAPTER V.

JOSEPH ELLICOTT APPOINTED LOCAL AGENT OF THE PURCHASE.

On the first day of November, 1800, Joseph Ellicott was appointed local agent of the Holland Purchase and celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his birth. It was a time of heartfelt felicitations and unfeigned rejoicing in the Ellicott family in which loyalty and affection were outstanding traits. This anniversary of Joseph's birth was a red letter day in Judith Ellicott's life though she could not quite approve of the way in which her tall handsome son was dressed fashionably in elegant broadcloth with white linen-cambric ruffles plaited in the most stylish way on the wristbands and bosom of his shirt. She would have preferred the Quaker dress. But there was no accounting for Joseph's ideas of fitting apparel; she had been informed that he dressed like the Indians when engaged in surveying the wilderness of Western New York. However he always used the "plain language" when addressing her, for which she was thankful. "Possessing courteous manners, his appearance is altogether calculated to please at first glance and in entering into conversation with him this favorable impression is much augmented by the correctness of his principles and the extent and variety of his information on nearly all topics of importance. He is particularly interesting and the subject is a favorite with him on the privations undergone in conducting surveys for the Holland Land Company," remarked an enthusiastic young Quaker cousin.

Knowledge of books was essential to his success in life and he devoted a great deal of time to study. His reading was extensive but it was thoroughly digested

and became a part of his own independent intellect.

Ellicott's reports of the survey of the Holland Purchase had met with unqualified approbation of the Company.

Vanderhoof gives the terms of Ellicott's engagement with the Holland Land Company as follows: "For the first ten years he was to receive five per cent cash upon all sales effected, six thousand acres of farming land, and five hundred acres at the Great Bend of the Tonawanda. [Where he had decided to establish the land office]. At the close of ten years the general agent proposed instead of a cash commission of five per cent, to assign to him one twentieth of all the contracts he had made. This was accepted by Mr. Ellicott and the amount was deeded to him in fee by the company. The six thousand acres stipulated in the contract he located along the ridge near Lockport, Niagara County. He afterwards added by purchase a strip of twelve hundred acres on the south side of this Plat. In the original survey of Buffalo he had laid out for himself a lot of one hundred acres, which he had purchased from the company. It was called an Out Lot, but occupies a conspicuous position in the now widely extended city. He bought seven hundred acres on Oak Orchard Creek embracing a fine waterpower, and the site of the present village of Shelby, and afterwards fourteen hundred acres below this which includes the village of Medina. And jointly with his brother Benjamin and others he was interested in other tracts on the Holland Purchase and Morris Reserve. . . . His was undoubtedly the largest estate accumulated up to that time in Western New York. It would now be estimated by millions."

On November 26 in 1800 Mr. Ellicott was in Albany on his way to the new settlement, from that city. He wrote Mr. Busti that he had issued handbills offering a portion of the Company's lands for sale. These were widely circulated in England and Holland as well as in the older portions of this country. A part of the handbill is here given:

“HOLLAND LAND COMPANY WEST GENESEO LANDS—INFORMATION.

“The Holland Land Company will open a land office in the ensuing month of September, for a sale of a portion of their valuable lands in the Genesee Country, state of New York, situated in the last purchase made of the Seneca Indians, on the western side of the Genesee River. For the convenience of applicants the Land Office will be established near the center of the lands intended for sale and on the main road leading from the eastern and middle states to upper Canada, Presque Isle in Pennsylvania, and the Connecticut Reserve. Those lands are situated, adjoining and contiguous to the lakes Erie, Ontario and the Straits of Niagara, possessing the advantage of the navigation and trade of all the upper lakes, the River St. Lawrence (from which the British settlement derives great advantage), also intersected by the Allegany River, navigable for boats of thirty to forty tons burthen, to Pittsburg and New Orleans, and contiguous to the navigable waters of the west branch of the Susquehanna River, and almost surrounded by settlements, where provision of every kind is to be had in great abundance, and on reasonable terms, renders the situation of the Holland Land Company's Geneseo lands, more eligible, desirous and advantageous for settlers than any other unsettled tract of inland country of equal magnitude in the United States. The greater part of this tract is finely watered (few exceptions) with never failing springs and streams, affording sufficiency of water for grist mills and other water works. The subscriber during the year 1798 and 1799 surveyed and laid off the whole of these lands into townships, to accommodate purchasers and settlers, he is now laying off into lots and tracts from one hundred twenty acres and upwards to the quantity contained in a township.

“The lands abound in limestone, and are calculated to suit every description of purchasers and settlers.

Those who prefer land timbered with black and white oak, hickory, poplar, chestnut, wild cherry, butternut and dogwood, or the more luxuriant timbered basswood or lyn, butternut, sugar tree (sugar maple), white ash, cucumber tree (a species of magnolia) and black walnut may be suited. Those who prefer level land or gradually ascending, affording extensive plains and valleys, will find the country adapted to their choice. In short such are the varieties of situations in this part of the Geneseo Country, everywhere almost covered with rich soil, that it is presumed that all purchasers who may be inclined to participate in the advantages of these lands, may select lots from one hundred twenty acres to tracts containing one hundred thousand acres that would fully please and satisfy their choice. The Holland Land Company, whose liberality is so well known in this country, now offers to all those who may wish to become partakers of the growing value of these lands such portions and such parts as they may think proper to purchase. Those who may choose to pay cash will find a liberal discount from the credit price."

The surveys of the townships were made after 1800. Asa Ransom having located at what is now the village of Clarence in January, 1800, and built a house, a portion of it was taken by Mr. Ellicott as a land office. James W. Stevens, who came from Philadelphia, acted as clerk, James Brisbane occasionally assisting, though his duties were usually confined to the Transit Storehouse. According to a tax roll dated October 6, 1800, and signed by Augustus Porter and Amos Hall, of Ontario County, there were then upon the Holland Purchase twelve taxable inhabitants, three of whom—Johnson, Middaugh, and Lane—resided in Buffalo. The Holland Land Company was assessed for three million three hundred thousand dollars.

The following extracts from the versatile pen of David Seaver were contributed to the "Batavia Spirit

of the Times" in 1874, giving a vivid picture of the purchase in 1800. Seaver found his material in works published in London by an English gentleman named Maud, who gives therein some experiences of his travels. In August, 1800, he visited Genesee Falls (Rochester) and Indian Allen's Mill. From there he went to Canawaugus (a mile or thereabouts west of Avon) and met the celebrated Indian chief, Hot Bread, whose mother was the royal princess Canawaugus, from whom the village was named. When Maud left Canawaugus he was accompanied by Hot Bread, who rode a horse whose ears were rimmed and tipped with silver. After passing Peterson's big spring (Caledonia), where fortunately he did not stop, he arrived at Ganson's (near Le Roy). Peterson, according to the historian Turner, had a very bad reputation: "The landlord, a Dane, had been a sea captain—and, tradition says, a pirate. He built the tavern near the spring and entertained travelers, cooking for them himself very good fare. After a while he married a girl who lived with the Dugans at Dugan's Creek. Peterson was strongly suspected of taking advantage of his secluded position for the purpose of robbery and murder. Dugan, a brother-in-law of Indian Allen, once charged Peterson with a specific offence, naming the victim. There was much uneasiness among the new settlers regarding him, and their suspicions at one time led to his arrest and confinement in Canandaigua jail. He was finally obliged to flee the country and afterwards died at sea."

The following entries from the traveler's diary are interesting, "Ganson's is now a flourishing township, in which twenty-one families are already settled. A new tavern and a number of dwelling houses are building. Recrossed Allen's Creek (Oatka); the bed a flat limestone rock, fifteen or twenty rods wide, with three or four inches of water; a handsome bridge was building. This creek is the western terminus of Captain Williamson's purchase (Pultney tract). A very

handsome road four rods wide has been cut, and the whole distance from the Genesee River to Ganson's being twelve miles in nearly a straight line. I now entered into what is called the Wilderness, but at two p. m. reached the Holland Company's storehouse and Frederick Walther's tavern (Stafford).

"The Holland Company consists of a number of merchants and others, principally residents in Holland, who purchased a very large tract of land from Mr. Morris. This territory, for such it may be called, is on the east bounded by Williamson's purchase, and on the west by Lake Erie and Niagara River. No part of the land is, I believe, yet settled, but at present under survey for that purpose. One of the principal surveyors, Ellicott, and his gang of men were at the tavern, and fully occupied the lodging hut; this with the additional circumstance of there being no hay for my horses, and no other feed than oats cut green in the straw, induced me to give up the design of sleeping here this night, but rather to push on to the next station At four p. m. we left Walther's and (at Batavia) fell in with the Tonawanda Creek, sluggish, shallow and broad. At six and a half p. m. we reached Garret Davis's tavern (near Dunham's Corners), near a small run of good water. This is one of the three stations which the Holland Company has this year established for the accommodation of travelers, who hitherto have been obliged to sleep in the woods. Davis first began to ply his axe in January last; he has now a good log house, a field of green oats, sown the eighteenth of June (the only feed I could get for my horses), and a very excellent garden, the most productive of any of its size I have seen since leaving New York. He had also cleared a pretty extensive field for wheat. On this land the logs were now burning, and I passed a greater part of the night in keeping up the fires. This employment I preferred to harboring with a number of strangers, one of whom was sick and not expected to live until morning. This

however was only the fearful conjectures of Davis. I got some maple sugar for my tea, and Mr. and Mrs. Davis paid me every possible attention, but I cannot praise them for neatness. Perhaps I ought not to expect it when the peculiarity of the situation and a large family of children are taken into account. From Allen's Creek to Walther's was excellent lands, but miserable roads, at times impassable and the wagoner would take his axe to cut a new passage. From Walther's to Davis's the road was better. At Davis's the woods are composed of small saplings closely crowded. This morning we experienced a very keen frost with a bright sun, and as late as eleven a. m. I stood in the sun to warm myself, my hands being benumbed with cold. Very scorching sun in the afternoon after leaving Walther's and troublesome flies and mosquitoes.

"Thursday, August 21, 1800. Started at daylight; we leave the thick woods and enter upon the Big Plains. These plains (Oakfield) were open groves of oak in the light shallow soil on limestone These plains are many miles in extent, and it struck me I had seen park grounds in England much like them. At three hundred and twenty-one miles (from Philadelphia) the oaks are smaller and more compact, and at three hundred twenty-two miles we entered woods of beech and maple. At seven and one half a. m. we reached the Indian town of Tonawanta, three hundred thirty miles. This settlement is on the west bank of the creek, which I now crossed for the second time. It bore however a different character here than at three hundred nineteen miles (Batavia), being clear and rapid.

"Left Tonawanta and passed through open plains of oak, with less of tamarisk and more grass, to three hundred thirty-four miles from my starting place when I fell in with the old road. At ten and a half a. m. reached Asa Ransom's station (Clarence, Erie County). I was here greatly surprised with an ex-

cellent breakfast of tender chicken and good loaf sugar for my tea. Ransom, like Davis, sat down in the woods in January, 1800; he has one hundred fifty acres, ten acres cleared and in oats. . . . The Holland Company has laid out a new road from Ransom's to Buffalo Creek which passes south of Davis's station but falls in with the present road at Ransom's and this road will make a difference of ten miles in forty-two. Ransom informed me that by an account he had kept, no less than one hundred and fifty families with their wagons had passed his house this summer, emigrating from Pennsylvania and New Jersey to Canada. Sixteen wagons passed in one day."

The Holland Company, contracting with Robert Morris for the tract of land in Western New York, doubtless expected perfect titles, which were necessary before the land could be resold either at wholesale or retail. There was an understanding with Morris before his bankruptcy in 1796. But the Treaty of Big Tree was not held until September, 1797 and the Company advanced large sums of money to keep the financier of the Revolution out of debtor's prison and free to carry on the treaty with the Indians for the titles of the lands; for as a part of the consideration of this sale Morris had agreed to buy or extinguish the possessory rights of the Senecas.

Paul D. Evans in his careful and exhaustive work "The Holland Land Company", writes: "In April, 1800, to rectify the lines of the various tracts to the eastward, it was agreed that Alexander Hamilton, David A. Ogden and Thomas Hooper should be appointed to go over the various deeds and make their awards as justly as possible. D. A. Ogden by some rather secret work put through the execution sale at Canandaigua quite to his satisfaction, and so prepared the way for the award of the three attorneys named above. This was made on the twenty-second day of January, 1801. Aside from the new lines which it laid down, it provided for distribution among all the land-owners of

the expenses incurred by the Holland Company in buying up judgments against Robert Morris. These totalled nearly twenty-four thousand dollars of which amount one fifth was charged to the company itself. Most of the owners accepted the award and paid the bill promptly. Church however, having lost some of the land formerly held by him, brought suit against Ogden as trustee under the award, in the chancery court of New York State. At the same time the trustees of Morris's honorary creditors who had lost most by supplying the deficiencies of the other holder, brought suit in the federal court. Both suits were lost. The courts upheld the award and required that the provisions be enforced.

"Meanwhile negotiations were going on between the Holland Land Company and Morris over the confirmation of the deed. The amicable suit which had been planned was not instituted. Instead a second agreement was made with Gouverneur Morris by which all claims were surrendered to one million five hundred thousand acres in consideration of the purchase by the Holland Land Company of certain annuities for Mrs. Robert Morris. Sixteen thousand dollars were set aside for this purpose.

"The suit of the trustees for the honorary creditors dragged on for a dozen years before it was settled in favor of the Company. With this settlement all troubles regarding titles so far as Morris and his heirs were concerned came to an end."

When Joseph Ellicott was selected as agent for the Holland Land Company, in 1800, a tract of one million and a half acres making up the western part of the purchase was still in dispute with Morris; and other lands had to be selected for settlement. The chosen tract of over half a million acres, intersected by the road running from the Genesee River to Fort Niagara, was but a short distance from older settlements begun by Phelps and Gorham; so at the time they had a marked advantage over the western part.

CHAPTER VI.

FOUNDING BATAVIA.

"Early in 1801," writes Colonel William Seaver, "Mr. Ellicott fixed his mind on Batavia as the most eligible spot for locating the Land Office and building up a town; the first intimation we discover of such intentions, is a letter to Richard M. Stoddard of Canandaigua, dated at Ransomville seventeenth February, 1801, in which he says: 'I expect to make my establishment at or near the bend of the Tonawanda and there let the Genesee Road fork, one to be directed to Buffalo and the other to Queenstown, and place my office in the fork looking eastward. Should you incline to improve a forty acre lot there, you can have it.'"

Some years later a huge stone arsenal, a sort of fort in fact, was located on the knoll to the east of the junction of Genesee Street (West Main) and Oakfield Road. In another letter bearing upon the same subject, dated Ransom's March 6, 1801, and addressed to Ezra White, Esq., he says: "In respect to the lots at the bend of the Tonawanda, they will be laid off in the early part of the spring. The road will be laid (I expect) from the new bridge to the Big Plains; I think likely in the course of two or three weeks, and probably some lots at the Bend; but previous to any selection, I shall set apart such of them as I shall conceive best calculated for public purchases, but nevertheless there will be a great sufficiency left for yourself and others of your friends, after the selection is made."

In a letter to Stephen Russell, Bloomfield, written about the tenth of May, 1801, Mr. Ellicott says: "I expect shortly to have all the lots laid out at the Bend. I conceived it best to postpone them for the present, in order to attend to the laying out of a piece of road be-

fore the leaves become so thick as to prevent us from seeing the country."

When it became known that Mr. Ellicott had decided to found the capital of the Holland Purchase at the bend of the Tonawanda Creek, people began to visit the spot with the idea that it would be a good place to buy land and settle. One Abel Rowe arrived in March, 1801 and located on the lot directly opposite the present Land Office. He immediately began to build a large log house which when completed became the family home and also a place of public entertainment soon known as Rowe's Tavern. In April Ellicott worked on the Buffalo Road near the site of Batavia. Early in May, 1801, Mr. Ellicott wrote a correspondent, "a line directed either to Transit Storehouse, or Mr. Rowe's Hotel, at the Bend of the Tonawanda, will come to hand."

Mr. Ellicott's business relations with ladies were marked by a charming old-fashioned courtesy, as illustrated by his letter in answer to some inquiries regarding the price of lots at the "Big Bend of the Tonawanda." The ladies, Mrs. Berry and Miss Wemple, wished to purchase two lots. He wrote them in most courtly language that when the town at the Bend was laid out he would immediately inform them, and that the lots would contain forty acres each, and "your application shall be held in remembrance."

It was a busy year. Stephen Russell put up a log tavern on the "island," at the northwest corner of Main (Genesee) and State Streets, which was the second building erected in the place. Isaac Sutherland built a log house on his farm west of the Bend and General Worthy Churchill and Colonel Rumsey built on farms east of the village. The latter building is a small frame house, said to be the first frame building west of the Genesee River, and it stands staunch and in good condition after one hundred and thirty-four years.

In December, 1801 a two-story log building for a land office was completed. It was of respectable size

and stood directly in front of the west wing of the dwelling house afterwards erected by Joseph Ellicott. In the rear was a kitchen or log house for the accommodation of the Ellicott household. As soon as completed this house was occupied by John Thompson as a boarding house. Mr. Ellicott did not move to it from Ransom's Grove (Clarence) until the next spring. Mr. Thompson, who had charge of building the house, had expressed his disapprobation of log houses; he liked the brick buildings of Canandaigua, the county seat of Ontario, and thought the money spent on log buildings "thrown away." But Mr. Ellicott soon quieted his scruples by remarking, "You will please consider the expense solely chargeable to me, and I hope I may never want for a worse house than a good log house. Indeed I should prefer living in such a house, to that of being obliged to board in the best brick house in Canandaigua."

On May 19, 1801, General Wilkinson, commanding officer at Fort Niagara, visited Mr. Ellicott at Buffalo Creek, asking him to survey a Military Road from the Fort to Buffalo along Niagara River. President Jefferson had directed this work to be done. Ellicott, realizing that the road would be advantageous to the Holland Land Company, consented to survey its route. By the eighth of June he had completed the traverse.

The principal work engaging his attention for the remainder of the year was road making and the survey of his Land Office town on the Tonawanda which he wished to name Bustia or Bustville in honor of Paul Busti of Philadelphia, the general agent of the Holland Land Company. From time immemorial there had been an Indian town at the Bend of the Tonawanda Creek and the junction of the two great Indian Trails, one of which leads from Lake Erie to the Hudson River, the other from Lake Ontario to the Susquehanna River. The place was known by at least four different Indian names, at different periods. Reverend Samuel Kirkland, early missionary to the Indians, said, "They call

the town Jo-a-ki, meaning in English raccoon." It was known to the Senecas as Ton-nor-aun-ta, meaning swift running water, and Deo-on-go-wa, the Great Meeting Place; so-called because it was the junction of two great Indian trails where the Redman of the east met the Redman of the west in council. "Along this trail from where the Land Office now stands to the site of the Court House was the great council and camping place of the Indians." To this day the Tonawanda Senecas call the city of Batavia Je-ne-an-da-sase-geh, the place of the mosquito. Joseph Ellicott was "the mosquito." "He was not at all pleased with the name, but the Indians never changed it," said his grand nephew, Professor Ellicott Evans. The agent of the Holland Land Company doubtless represented to the Indians the unfair and aggressive dealings of white people in general. When the White Men came they called the place the Great Bend of the Tonnewanta or "The Bend."

Mr. Ellicott wrote Mr. Busti in July: "It is with pleasure that I enclose a plan of Bustia or Bustville." But the astute Italian gentleman refused to have the place named for him, writing: "I should fear that your intention of honoring me would have just the contrary effect. A name so strange as mine is may very easily lead our posterity into the belief that the town received its name from a savage famous for his murders and ferocity. I beg you to spare me the risk of being recalled in that way, to the recollection of men.

"Towns ought to be called by the name of their founder. Rome has perpetuated the name of Romulus, Ellicottstown must also eternize yours. This is the more proper as you are to be the founder, the principal inhabitant, and in some ways its lord, as no doubt, you will take there a part of the land allowed you according to contract."

After Ellicott yielded to Paul Busti's wishes regarding the name of the town, he called it Tonnewanta for a short time but finally concluded to name it Ba-

tavia in honor of the Republic of Batavia of which its Dutch proprietors were citizens.

The village lots were twenty rods front and one mile deep. They originally sold for five dollars per acre. Besides the Ellicott brothers and other surveyors who were most of the time in Batavia in 1801, there was Abel Rowe, David McCracken, M. D. and Stephen Russell.

"It is a well-situated village and probably the next county town, and a post town as soon as I can have a building (finished) for an office," remarked Mr. Ellicott, and Paul Busti wrote "The site of your office is chosen with judgment and I hope will stop all travelers to the west to make bargains with you."

The following postscript to one of Mr. Ellicott's letters addressed to Mr. William M. Stoddard of Canandaigua gives some idea of the wages paid for surveying. "P. S. As the western boundary of this tract has never been ascertained and surveyed as the proprietors expected, it will become necessary for you to effect that boundary, and as it is of considerable importance that it be accurately drawn, it will be proper frequently to take references to the Transit Meridian, being part of the eastern boundary of the Holland Company's land by admeasuring due east therefrom and ascertaining a number of points through which the western boundary of the aforesaid tract must pass; and as that business will require twice the time and labor it will take to run the other line set forth in the next plan you will receive an additional two dollars and fifty cents for each mile of said boundary making in the whole for each mile of eighty chains of said boundary the sum of five dollars which I shall likewise hold myself accountable to pay."

Mr. Ellicott, though careful and conscientious regarding unnecessary expenditures of the Company's funds, knew that an outlay for roads must be made to admit settlers and facilitate marketing their products. As already noted quite early in the spring of 1798 he

had widened the Indian trail which extended from Buffalo Creek to the Genesee River in order to haul supplies for his surveying party. The parallel state road begun by Charles Williamson the same year ran through lands selected by the Indians for their reservations east of Buffalo. As it was a great advantage to the owners of lots which lay along its course, and to the Company as well, Ellicott proceeded to connect the new land office at Batavia by a road of its own, with the village at the mouth of Buffalo Creek, engaging the "White Seneca" to make a route for the Buffalo Road south of the Reservation. [The White Seneca, so-called because he wore a head dress of white feathers, lived at Spirit Lake (Divers Lake) north of Indian Falls]. He did his work wonderfully well, marking the road through the forest with his tomahawk all the way to Vanderventer's for ten dollars and locating a road from Eleven Mile Creek via the mouth of the Tonawanda to Old Fort Schlosser for eight dollars. "White Chief" began operations on March 21, 1801, and on the twenty-sixth he reported the completion of his work on the Buffalo Road, stating that he had found good ground and that many places he passed through did his heart good on account of the beauty of the land. Two days later Mr. Ellicott inspected the route and wrote: "I am well pleased with the way in which the Indian Engineer has followed the ridges and avoided the wet places."

Uriah Cummings commenting upon the feat performed by the "White Chief" wrote: "It seems somewhat singular that twenty-one words constitutes the sole and only notice in history that 'White Chief' received for his work, which in the light of today falls but little short of the marvelous.

"The surveyor of today is equipped with a complete outfit, including a level instrument, needle, stadia, chain and a corps of helpers; and he cuts away the trees and undergrowth that obstructs his vision when working in woodland and he generally comes out about

where he intended. But 'White Chief' had no helpers, and his only instrument was his tomahawk. His path lay through a dense primeval forest, over fallen tree trunks, through tangled undergrowth which obscured his view at every step; surrounded by day with prowling snarling wolves, with panthers and wild cats crawling and crouching in the overhanging branches; while at night his camp fire was surrounded by the howling, screeching, bloodthirsty creatures. But through eighteen miles of wilderness, which had never been desecrated by the sound of an axe, the 'White Chief' held his way. Leaving the great central trail at the site where years later the old Arsenal stood, west of Batavia, he marked his path through to East Pembroke, Pembroke, Murray's Corners, the Grant Club Corners, and on to Vanderventer's Stream, where he intersected the great central trail—the Wah-ah-gwen-ne of the Iroquois. During the summer of 1801 Mr. Ellicott made a wagon road over the identical course laid out by the 'White Chief' and thus was born our charming and picturesque old Buffalo Road."

About the same time work began on three roads starting from Batavia. One running north of the Reservation to Niagara River. Paul D. Evans says: "These roads were probably completed in 1803." Another from Batavia to Big Tree (Geneseo) on which land seekers from Pennsylvania might continue to the western part of the Purchase, and another also beginning at Batavia and running northward, crossing the Tonawanda Swamps and opening communication with Lake Ontario, where Mr. Ellicott expected to build a great city at the mouth of Oak Orchard Creek. But for some years there was little transportation by water. Business centered upon the principal thoroughfare, the Old Buffalo Road. "There was no doubt of the value of the soil along the lake shore, but there was a wide belt of dense dark forest and wet soil; its whole aspect repulsive and forbidding. This region was sickly in the early years and settlement was slow."

CHAPTER VII.

MR. ELLICOTT'S JOURNAL.

Joseph Ellicott's journal beginning in January, 1801, gives many interesting sidelights on his activities:

"This day many applications for land between New Amsterdam and Presque Isle triangle. Rec'd Mr. Holmes, an Anabaptist preacher and missionary among the Indians, preached for the inhabitants of New Amsterdam. His sermons were well adapted to the situation and capacity of the people he preached to; he appears to be a good man worthy of the charge entrusted to his care.

"Ransomville, January 28. In the evening Mr. William Wadsworth arrived here for money on account the Holland Land Company's tax, representing the distressed situation of the workmen employed in erecting the public jail of the county, stating that the work was nearly finished and that there was many laborers and mechanics to pay off whose circumstances was such that without they could get assistance by receiving their wages due them by the county they would be reduced to a disagreeable situation for the want thereof. His request was for two thousand dollars. . . . I am fully sensible that the tax levied on the Holland Company is unjust in the highest degree. . . . The Company is assessed to the best of my information for four million five hundred thousand acres of land, that is, including all the lands within the boundaries of the late purchase not even excluding lands belonging to the Indians, and the state of New York along Niagara River."

Ellicott determined to write the Company's attorneys at Canandaigua on the subject, and put it in their power to advance the sum of one thousand dollars.

He stated that the Company was assessed four million five hundred thousand dollars while their lands were only three million three hundred and forty thousand five hundred fifty-three acres. At the rate of one dollar per acre this would not amount to more than \$3,350.55. "Consequently they are aggrieved in the sum of \$1,159.45 . . . But sir, feeling for the workmen and others who have trusted upon the punctuality and faith of the county for the payment of their respective salaries when their work was performed, I have consented to grant the sum of eight hundred dollars, provided that grant can be so regulated that it may either be considered by me a part of the tax paid in on account of a just assessment that may be due by the Company . . . Since writing the above I have consented to the farther advance of two hundred dollars which will make the whole sum one thousand dollars to be disposed of in like manner and upon the same principles as the first mentioned sums aforesaid. I expect to do myself the pleasure to wait on you in a fortnight if weather and health permit. In the meantime you will believe me sincerely, your friend and humble servant, Joseph Ellicott, to N. W. Howell or Dudley Saltonstall, esqs., Attorneys at Law, Canandaigua, New York."

At this time Mr. Ellicott was sometimes at Buffalo Creek where it will be remembered, no town had yet been surveyed or laid out, but he was more of the time at Ransoms. His trouble in selecting a name for the future Great Lakes Port is illustrated by his heading a letter "New Amsterdam Alias Buffalo Creek." New Englanders would have none of the Dutch names even when they settled on the Holland Purchase.

Mr. Ellicott confided to a friend "My present situation at Ransom's is gloomy for the want of society; our nearest neighbor being eighteen miles distant." And about this time a relative wrote him from Maryland as follows, "I observe Thou says Thou are living without society. Can a person be justifiable in spending

the few years he has to live in a way that is not the most agreeable to him? Think on this and retire from that toilsome life Thou hast pursued so many years, and enjoy the few remaining to the fullest extent."

From the Journal: "June 5, 1801. Took a traverse of Cayuga Creek and the road about three miles up the great River Niagara, and encamped at White Oak Bluff, an eligible situation for a town, commanding a handsome prospect of the river as well as being in sight of the spray which is seen continually to ascend from the thundering cataract of Niagara. [Certainly this entry expresses sincere admiration of the magnificent scenery.]

"June 6. Traversed the road to within one half mile of Tonnewanta and encamped at the Creek.

"Sunday, June 7. Brought up the traverse of the road to Tonnewanta and ran ninety chains on the south side towards Black Rock.

"Monday, June 8, and June 9, and 10. Completed the traverse of the road, and returned to my quarters at Mr. Ransom's after experiencing a very uncomfortable campaign. The mosquitoes probably never were more plenty. During the expedition I calculate that I have lost by them at least four ounces of blood."

During the last three days of the work mentioned above, the Seneca Indians were holding a council at Buffalo Creek, their principal town. This was a General Council attended by representatives from each Indian village in western New York and those of upper Canada. Many people thought their object was to prevent the road from being opened through Indian lands along Niagara River, and some people were much alarmed. But it proved to be only a trial of sundry old men and women of the Delaware Nation and a few of the Senecas who were accused of sorcery and witchcraft. The Grand Council was convened to decide what their punishment should be. After three days' trial it was determined that those persons accused of

witchcraft should be threatened with death, in case they persisted in bewitching people. The Council upon passing this resolution adjourned sine die, without doing anything about stopping the progress of the road. [Mr. Ellicott's story of the Great Council somewhat abridged.]

"Sunday, June 14. Went to explore the country to the southwest; unfortunately almost broke my leg, had to return in much pain without effecting my purpose.

"Tuesday, 22 June. This day Mr. Benjamin Ellicott, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Brisbane and myself went to Twelve Mile Creek to assist in raising the frame of a sawmill.

"Thursday, 25 June. Several families arrived here bound for Canada. Could not be prevailed upon to purchase land in this quarter. No other applications for land.

"Saturday, 27 June. Left the office at Ransom's and proceeded to the town of Bustia (Batavia) to complete laying it out. Arrived there in the evening.

"Returned on the ninth of July to our quarters at Mr. Ransom's. That is to say my brother, Mr. B. Ellicott and myself having laid out a mill seat, contracted to have the mill dam framed, etc.; left Bustiaville the seventh.

"Thursday Ninth July. Being much fatigued by having to walk from Davis's (blank) yesterday, our horses having left us at the town of Bustiaville the day after our arrival, did not attempt much business. However, sold a lot to Mr. Grant of Trent, Ohio.

"Tuesday, 14 July, 1801. This day completed the draft of the plan of Bustiaville and enclosed it together with sundry copies of letters to Mr. Busti.

"Wednesday the 17 July. This is the first season that quails have been heard in this part of the country.

"Wednesday 22 July, 1801. Went to Twelve Mile Creek to see how the millwright and diggers were coming on. Returning through a thick shower of rain

I found the benefit of a good umbrella, which preserved me from the rain altogether. No applications for land.

"Thursday, July 23, 1801. Mr. Sam'l Jennings who arrived here last night as he alleged to see about purchasing land, but is without doubt insane. Left here at one o'clock bound for South Carolina without money. He alledges that on his way here his saddle bag was plundered in Virginia, and he never missed the money until he was three miles from the house and his delicacy was so great that he could not think of returning to inquire after it. During the whole time he was here could not be prevailed upon to eat a mouthful, but was fond of brandy. A person arrived here this day from York (Toronto) Canada to inquire the price of land in order to settle ten families.

"Monday, July 27. Mr. Alston and his lady, the daughter of the Vice-President of the United States (Aaron Burr), arrived here this day at twelve o'clock on their way to view the Great Falls of Niagara."

In a long letter to the general agent dated "Ransoms, West Genesee, Aug. 25, 1801," Mr. Ellicott writes again concerning taxes, which he considers unjust, assessed against the Company's land. "By the inhabitants of the settled part of Northampton in the old purchase, whose town officers assess a tax on the Company's lands and apply the money to the opening and improving roads and other town expenses within their own settlement. . . . This being the case, I am extremely anxious to procure settlers and inhabitants for the purpose of effecting a division of the township, in order that all the money that may hereafter be assessed for town purposes from the Company's lands may go to the improvement of roads, erecting bridges, etc., within their own territory, and until we have a sufficient number of settlers on our lands to enable us to bring forward also a sufficient number of voters to divide the town officers, it is probable we shall be under the necessity to submit to this imposition. It was in

part with this view that I recommended the opening for sale the township which includes New Amsterdam (Buffalo). That township from its proximity to Canada would command in a short period a considerable settlement."

Closing the letter he wrote: "I am sorry to inform you that many of the settlers are grievously afflicted with ague and fevers; and one worthy industrious man has fallen a victim. He has left a wife and three children to lament his loss. My friend Mr. Thompson has been these several days laboring under this complaint, but is now nearly restored. Myself, Brother Benjamin and the rest of my family are enjoying a good state of health, which I sincerely hope has been yours and your family's constant situation and that you will long continue that most of all earthly blessings you have my constant prayers. In the meantime you will believe me with great respect and esteem, your obedient servant, Joseph Ellicott."

"September 17, (at Batavia), Explored Tonnewanta Creek, found good lands.

"18, at Batavia. Explored down Tonnewanta, examined and altered the new road, and laid it on firmer ground.

"19. Got the new house in such a situation as to lodge in it and transact business.

"22. Eclipse of the moon this morning, the sky being remarkably clear afforded a beautiful prospect."

On October 3, 1801, Joseph was at Ransom's and in the evening Benjamin arrived from Tonnewanta (Batavia), where he was endeavoring to erect a mill dam; and he reported a very difficult situation, but after some consultation he agreed to return and finish the work if possible. From October 5 until the sixteenth of November Joseph was most of the time at Batavia helping to put in the mill dam.

Mr. Ellicott removed from Ransom's to his house in Batavia the next spring. In a letter to the General Agent dated "Pine Grove (Ransom's), Dec. 4, 1801,"

Mr. Ellicott wrote: "The sawmill I have been erecting at Batavia, which has cost a deal of labor, not being a natural seat, but a place where a convenience of this kind is absolutely necessary, will, the millwright (Benjamin Ellicott) informs me, be in motion by the tenth inst., at which period we expect to begin to make ourselves and the settlers comfortable, with floors, etc., which will be a great acquisition to our present situation."



CHAPTER VIII.

THE COUNTY OF GENESEE.

Mr. Ellicott spent much of the winter 1801-1802 in Albany lobbying, his project being the erection of a new county in Western New York, to be taken from Ontario. He met with vigorous opposition from Mr. James Wadsworth, who had a counter project. Ellicott attributed his success to the absence of Wadsworth at the time of final decision, saying that "had Wadsworth been there, his plausibility and address would have made trouble." On March 30, 1802, by act of the Legislature, the new county of Genesee was taken from Ontario and Batavia became the county seat. The township of Batavia included the entire Holland Purchase. The Genesee County of 1802 contained four townships, Northampton, Southampton, Leicester and Batavia. The cost of surveying the Holland Purchase was \$70,000.00

During this year Mr. Ellicott built what was eventually the east wing of his mansion and afterwards moved the Land Office into it and tore down the two story log Land Office.

The sawmill which had been completed in December, 1801, was a great convenience to the settlers. Timber was hauled from Pine Hill, now Elba, six miles distant, and the demand for lumber was great, so Mr. Ellicott hired Isaac Sutherland to cut a road to the "pinery," and John Lamberton, with an assistant named Mayo, cut a road from what is now the west line of the city eastward for two miles. The street called Genesee, now Main, was one hundred feet wide. The price for cutting the timber was twelve dollars per acre when cut up into logs which were removed by the owners of the lots bordering on the road.

During the year thirty or more heads of families, some of them old friends of Mr. Ellicott's, settled in the village. James W. Stevens of the Land Office force, James Brisbane who had been in charge of the company's storehouse, and Ebenezer Cary who had assisted Mr. Ellicott in the survey of Pennsylvania lands in 1795 and had accompanied him to the Holland Purchase, sometimes acting in the capacity of surveyor, at others as clerk of the store-house in Stafford. It was very pleasing to the Ellicott brothers that these friends and fellow workers decided to settle near them, and there was much friendly sociability between the first families.

Professor John Kennedy once remarked, "Batavia was started by college men and patriots—the very first clearing in these woods was graced by the highest society in America."

Shortly after the saw mill began to operate, a combination court-house, tavern and jail for the new County of Genesee was erected, as Mr. Ellicott had persuaded the State Legislature to pass the law dividing Ontario County and making Batavia the new county seat by agreeing that the public buildings should be erected at the expense of the Holland Land Company. The hotel part of the new county building was rented, but in a short time was taken for county offices, as even land seekers objected to being entertained in the same structure with the jail.

The Company made a few loans to stimulate business, such as gifts of land to early blacksmiths and a loan of \$3,000.00 to John Thompson and James Brisbane to establish a general store at the "Bend". These loans were recommended by Mr. Ellicott who had perfect confidence in the men. Thompson soon withdrew from the mercantile firm, but Brisbane, an astute business man, carried on, and was soon able to repay the loan.

Mr. Ellicott's correspondence was extensive and important and after locating the Land Office at Batavia

he at once petitioned Gideon Granger, then Post Master-General, to establish a postoffice at that place, and he also recommended his close friend James Brisbane for the office of Postmaster.

The following is the petition to the Postmaster-General—

“Village of Batavia, May 15, 1802.

“Dear Sir:—In consequence of the inconvenience that result to the inhabitants in this part of the State of New York, for the want of a Post Office, I take the liberty to solicit the Postmaster-General to establish one at this village. To effect this County of Genesee in the western part of the State of New York. Although I cannot flatter the Postmaster-General with much augmentation to the revenue which may arise from an establishment of this kind, yet, as the county is fast settling and the Land Office is kept here for the sale of a large extent of country, there is little doubt but that within a short period a considerable revenue will arise from this establishment, as well as be productive of great convenience to the inhabitants.

“There is another circumstance which, we presume, will have a considerable influence with the Postmaster-General in granting us this favor and that is the establishment asked for will not make any additional expense to the United States for carrying mail, the situation of this village being directly on the post road leading through the Genesee Country to Niagara. Our nearest post office is twenty-five miles distant on the east side of Genesee River at Hartford (now Avon) in the Country of Ontario.

“In order more fully to give you the best information to enable you to judge of the merits of the favor we ask, I have inclosed a map of the western part of the State of New York and delineated thereon the point where the village is erected which will point out more clearly its local situation than any geographical description I can give. A friend of mine, Mr. Seth Pease, some-

time since informed me that you expected to be at the General Post Office and if that gentleman should be there at this period, permit me to refer you to him whose knowledge of the country will afford you ample information. [Mr. Seth Pease was the Postmaster-General's brother-in-law.] Permit me at the same time I am asking for the establishment of the post office to recommend Mr. James Brisbane as a fit and proper character to take charge of said office provided the Postmaster-General shall think it expedient to make the establishment.

"For any information in relation to Mr. Brisbane's character, should the Postmaster-General deem it necessary, he will permit me to refer him to Mr. Pease. In behalf of a number of the inhabitants of this village and the adjacent country, I beg leave to subscribe myself with due respect and esteem, your most obedient and humble servant,

"Joseph Ellicott, Agent Holland Land Company."

James Brisbane was appointed Postmaster, and his commission was dated July 21, 1802. The mail was carried at that time once in two weeks, sometimes on foot and sometimes on horseback, from Canandaigua to Batavia, to Lewiston and Fort Niagara. But soon after a weekly mail was established directly from Canandaigua to Buffalo. This was a great convenience for the Land Office business. The Postoffice was opposite where the present one stands, on the corner of Main (Genesee) and Jefferson (Church) Streets, and it was located in James Brisbane's general store.

In those days postage was high and could be prepaid or not. Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott told the following story to give their friends "back home" some idea of conditions in the wilderness of Western New York, and it caused gales of laughter as well as expressions of admiration for the pluck and initiative of a pioneer Batavian. A Batavia woman was told that a letter had arrived for her, and she was overjoyed, for a letter was a rare occurrence in her life. But alas!



The Ellicott Mansion

After Joseph Ellicott's death, owned by his nephew, David Ellicott Evans. In 1850 it housed the famous Bryan Seminary for Young Ladies. Torn down in 1887 to make way for Dellinger Avenue.

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the postage was not prepaid. There was twenty-five cents due.

"Hold that letter, Mr. Brisbane," the spirited woman commanded the postmaster, while I skin a calf." In a few days the letter was redeemed, for the calf had been killed and its hide sold to a tanner for twenty-five cents, enough to pay the postage.

"Though the agents found it impossible to contribute large sums in cash to build roads in the early days, they laid out and improved many highways by payments in land. Mr. Ellicott was very active in this. . . . Had there been a settler upon every lot upon the crossroads, the roads might have been kept in good condition. But the Company still owned most of the lots and according to the laws of the time non-residents were not subject to road tax. So the best of the roads were bad, and many of them were almost impassible," writes Paul D. Evans.

The year 1802 was auspicious in the Ellicott family, Andrew had been appointed Secretary of the State Land Office of Pennsylvania and had moved from Philadelphia to Lancaster because the latter city was then the capital of the state; and Joseph had moved early in the spring from Ransom's, now Clarence, to his new home in Batavia.

On the twenty-third of April James Brisbane had left New York with goods for his store in Batavia. They came in a sloop to Albany, and from there by way of the Mohawk River, Oswego River, Lake Ontario and Niagara River to Lewiston and Buffalo and thence to Batavia, where they arrived about the middle of May.



CHAPTER IX.

BUSY YEARS.

"Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott were laying the foundations of great wealth and accumulating an immense landed estate, to be the future homes of the descendants of their parents Joseph and Judith Ellicott, in Western New York. They supplied their mother and her household with ample means to continue their residence in the family mansion at Ellicott's Upper Mills, Maryland. They had used every argument which filial love and devotion could suggest to persuade their mother to make her home with them in Batavia, but without success," writes the family historian.

The brothers frequently visited their mother, their brother Andrew, their cousins at Ellicott's Mills (Ellicott City), Maryland, and their sisters, nieces, nephews and cousins in Baltimore. Those visits were always a great source of pleasure to all.

Andrew A. Ellicott accompanied his Uncle Joseph when he returned to Batavia after visiting his brother, the elder Andrew and his family at Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1803. Andrew A. Ellicott and his Cousin, David Ellicott Evans became clerks in the Land Office at Batavia that year. Joseph Ellicott was exceedingly fond of young people, and delighted to fill his house with youthful relatives, for whose happiness and well being he never ceased to plan. David was the son of his beloved sister Rachel, who was Benjamin's twin.

During this year's visit to Ellicott's Upper Mills, the mother gave the musical clock to her son Joseph and he took it with him to Batavia. The arrangement of the clock permits the selection of any one of the following twenty-four tunes, by the movement of a pointer to the proper place: The Hemp Dresser, Harvest

Home, Balance A Straw, Plague on Those Girls, Captain Read's Minuet, Humors of Wapping, Black Sloven, Free Masons Health, King of Prussia's March, The Pilgrim, Come Chloe, Give Me Sweet Kisses, Bellile's March, Lady Coventry's Minuet, The Hounds Are All Out, The Lass With The Delicate Air, God Save the King, Nancy Dawson, Lads and Lassies, Lovely Nancy, Wellington's Frolic, Come, Brave Boys, Address to Sleep, Seaman's Hymn, Lady Anthem. Joseph and Benjamin were pleased to have this wonderful piece of their father's workmanship in their home in the wilderness, and took excellent care of it.

Joseph had left the strenuous work of surveying and settled down to the duties of the local agency. It was no easy task, as the records of the Land Office show. He was a hard worker, careful and systematic in all his business; and he required from his helpers prompt and faithful service in whatever capacity they served. His extensive correspondence with the General Agency in Philadelphia, and with prominent men of the day concerning political measures and internal improvements consumed much time.

He would not accept political office as the Company did not wish to mix in politics. He was appointed County Judge in 1803, but resigned immediately.

As the survey of New Amsterdam "alias Buffalo" was progressing in 1803 and 1804, Mr. Ellicott was making plans for the benefit of the village, which with prophetic vision he saw as the great lake port of the State. And he laughingly announced: "I shall do all I can for Batavia because the Lord will take care of Buffalo."

In his admirable "History of Buffalo", J. N. Larned tells how Mr. Ellicott established street lines which gave form and direction to the whole aftergrowth of the town; "The Hub or nave, so to speak, was a specially large lot—outer lot 104—containing one hundred acres of land, fronting on the road which

came in from Batavia, but which entered Buffalo on a nearly north and south line. On the eastern side of this, the present Main Street of Buffalo, the lot in question filled the space between what is now Swan and Eagle Sts., extending eastward for a mile. This lot was reserved by Mr. Ellicott for himself, with the intention of building a residence upon it, at the center. He gave it a sweeping curve to the street in front of it and radiated thence southwestwardly to the lake the street we know as Erie, but which he named Vollenhoven Avenue, and northwestwardly to the Niagara River. Its formidable name was Schimmelpenink Avenue (now Niagara Street). At right angles with the frontage of his lot, from the middle point in the curve, he ran another street westward to the lake and called it Stadnitzki Avenue. It is the Church Street of today. For the main thoroughfare from which these centralizing street lines were drawn he intended two names: Willink Avenue in the part south of the interrupted curve, and Van Stophorst Avenue in the northward part. This subsequently straightened into Main Street. . . . Mr. Ellicott began the plotting of Niagara Street System by laying out Busti Avenue (Genesee Street) at right angles with Niagara, then Cazenovia Avenue (Court Street) at right angles with Main, the three to cross Niagara at the same point, thus creating the somewhat bewildering maze of Niagara Square. This square did not become the center of the city, as Mr. Ellicott intended, because the State had reserved a mile strip along the Niagara River; and so Buffalo was thrown to the east and south, in a measure interrupting the Ellicott plan.

“For about a score of years the Buffalonians practiced their tongues and their pens on the Dutch names that Mynheer Ellicott gave to their streets and custom could not lend smoothness or ease to the writing or the speech. So they freed themselves from the more jawbreaking of the names which good Joseph Ellicott had inflicted upon them.”

Buffalo was visited by the Rev. Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, in 1804. He was not well impressed by the inhabitants of the place and expressed his disapprobation as follows: "The people are a casual collection of adventurers, and have the usual characteristics of adventurers, thus collected, when remote from regular society, retaining but little sense of government or religion."

Probably the Reverend gentleman did not meet Mons. Louis Stephen Corteulx, whom Mr. Ellicott had just appointed local agent in Buffalo. He was a "courtly and cultivated gentleman."

William Hodge describes Mons. Corteulx, a French aristocrat and refugee, as "very courteous. He wore the old style dress, queue, breeches, long stockings, and Knee and shoe-buckles."

Turner lists fourteen owners of property in New Amsterdam that year.

In the spring of 1804 two young ladies arrived in Batavia on horseback over the trail from the east, Margaret Eleanor Brisbane came to visit her brother, the postmaster. Her friend Mary Lucy Stevens, also had a brother in the back-woods settlement, at the Tonawanda Bend. He was James W. Stevens, clerk at the Land Office. These cultured charming girls were a great acquisition to the social life of the village, and the Ellicotts and others gave parties and sight-seeing excursions in their honor. Of course they visited the combination store and post office of James Brisbane. Miss Stevens noticed that the office was destitute of a sign, and offered to paint one if the young postmaster would furnish a board, paint, and brush. This he gladly did, which resulted in a very neatly painted and lettered sign which may be seen today at the Batavia Post Office, as good as ever after one hundred and thirty two years.

Some years after painting the Post Office sign, Mary Lucy Stevens married James Brisbane; and their grandson, Arthur Brisbane, the journalist, has said,

"I think my grandmother did artistic work on that Post Office sign."

Margaret Eleanor Brisbane, after a courtship of many years married Trumbull Cary, who had been a clerk in the combination store and Post Office. They began housekeeping in the beautiful mansion which was given to the City of Batavia by their grandson, George Cary of Buffalo, in 1935.

A wellknown writer of today says: "Even cities have personalities of their own. . . . This striking difference in towns we have all felt, the question is how do they get their character in the first place? I suppose people of taste and means attract other people with taste and means. Towns, like people, have both heredity and environment, the heredity of original natural endowments, and the environment or influence of what people do to them. The results are personalities which are entirely different from each other." [For more than a century Batavia retained many of the characteristics of its first settlers.]

A brilliant literary light, Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, visited Batavia in the summer of 1804. Had he been entertained at the Ellicott home, as travelers usually were, he might have had a better opinion of the place; but as they were out, the poet continued his journey towards Niagara Falls and stopped for the night in a rude log cabin which stood on the site of the Redfield mansion at the west line of the city. So in the "miserable little back woods settlement of Batavia" the illustrious poet spent a miserable night. He had already expressed his opinion concerning American society, which to him seemed to be "composed of Christians, Mohawks, Democrats and all". That he was very much affected by the dreariness of the woods between Batavia and Buffalo is indicated by his poem, "Song of the Evil Spirits of the Woods", composed, as he says in explanation, "from an idea which occurred to me in passing through the very dreary wilderness between Batavia, a new settlement in the midst

of the woods, and the little village of Buffalo on Lake Erie."

Another traveler, one Robert Sutcliff, gives a different impression which has been preserved in a volume of his writings entitled "Travels in Some Parts of North America." He gives an appreciative account of Mr. Ellicott's work on the Holland Purchase and of the admirable map of it, made by Benjamin and Joseph "which describes every stream and the quality of the land in each division and the timber upon it accurately." Mr. Sutcliff tells of spending a night in Batavia as the guest of the Ellicott brothers, "where I was kindly and generously entertained." He describes Joseph as "a young man of stability, very agreeable and well informed. By living so much in the woods he has acquired a good deal of the Indian air in his dress, wearing leggings moccasins as is the manner of Indians." We have ample testimony however, that both Joseph and Benjamin dressed faultlessly in the fashionable garments of their time for social occasions and for their visits in the East, having discarded the Quaker costume altogether.

A familiar story, the experience of a youthful couple of pioneers of Daws Corners, a few miles from Batavia, will perhaps give some idea of the hardships endured by settlers on the farms of Western New York one hundred and thirty years ago. Mrs. Young gave the following account of their journey into the wilderness to the historian of the Holland Purchase, Turner: "My husband having the year before been out and purchased his land, in the fall of 1804 we started from our home in Virginia on horseback for our new home. We came through Maryland crossing the Susquehanna at Milton, Pennsylvania, thence to Tioga Point and on to Batavia.

"In crossing the Allegheny Mountains night came upon us. The horses became frightened by wild beasts and refused to proceed. We wrapped ourselves in our cloaks and horse blankets and attempted to get some rest, but had a bad night of it. Panthers came near

us, often screaming terrifically. The frightened horses snorted and stamped upon the rocks. Taking an early start in the morning, we came to a settler's cabin and were informed that we had stopped in a common resort of panthers.

"On reaching our destination my husband built a shanty, on our land, the shanty was about ten feet square, flat roofed, covered with split ash shingles, the floor was made of halves of split basswood logs, and there was no chimney. A blanket answered the purpose of the door until my husband found time to make a door of split planks. A bedstead was made by boring holes in the side of the shanty, inserting pieces of timber which rested on two upright posts in front, a side piece completed the structure. Peeled basswood bark answered for bed cord. We had of course brought no bed with us on horseback, so one had to be procured. We bought a big cotton bag at Brisbane's store in Batavia, and stuffed it with cattails. It was far better than no bed at all.

"The second year we were in, I had an attack of fever and ague, which confined me for nearly a year. And that year my husband cleared four acres, besides taking care of me and doing the cooking."

A grist mill at Batavia was completed late in 1804 and was a great convenience to the settlers who had been obliged to go for long distances to have their grain ground or to grind it by hand in stump mortars or Indian mortars made of stone.

Turner informs us that "in November, 1804, Joseph Ellicott was appointed Presidential Elector, and as the electoral college was to meet at Hudson, New York, in December, he started for that city on horseback in the latter part of November, accompanied by his nephew, David Ellicott Evans. For several days before their departure from Batavia not a morsel of bread had been seen in the village; there was plenty of pork and potatoes, vegetables and game, but no bread, not even johnny-cake, could be procured in the whole settlement.

The Batavians were expecting their grist mill to begin operations any day. So with breadless stomachs the Elector and his nephew started on their journey, but fortunately for those they left behind, they met a man in the woods between Stafford and Le Roy leading two pack horses loaded with flour. Mr. Ellicott at once purchased the cargo of flour and sent it to the destitute Batavians and went on his way rejoicing. When they returned from Hudson in December the grist mill was in operation and since then Batavia has never been destitute of bread."

By the beginning of the year 1804 the entire Purchase had been thrown open for retail sales.

In the autumn of 1805 Ellicott's anger was aroused by the increased taxes on the Company's lands which had been voted for the most part by delinquent debtors, whose own share of the taxes was very slight in townships consisting almost entirely of unsettled land.

* "As liberality and indulgence were the mottoes of the Dutch Company it was seldom that court proceedings were instituted in attempt to collect debts. Any claim which the Company had for the good will of the settlers was based primarily upon the indulgence which it almost universally showed to them. It may have fallen short of what it should have done to advance the economic development of the great tract under its control but never did it oppress any of its settlers, nor, save in most exceptional cases, ever take strict measures against them which the law allows."

Cash was scarce on the Purchase in early times, as it is in most new countries; and the settlers bartered grain, a calf or a sheep for needed supplies and implements, at the local store; and for about five years, from 1805 to 1810, the Company accepted payments in KIND from them, Mr. Ellicott realizing that sales would be easy but collections difficult, had asked the proprietors to help the settlers to make their payments in this way; and as early as 1802 he had wished to

* Paul D. Evans' "The Holland Land Company."

change the rule of withholding deeds until the land was fully paid for. If Ellicott could have had his way, all settlers who had made the initial payment of ten per cent, and also made some substantial improvements upon the land, would have been granted deeds. On the other hand Busti, always cautious, restrained him. Ellicott, seeing more directly the advantage of more voters in the settlements, could not be convinced. There was also the problem of jurors, a pressing one, as the State laws required all electors of governor and senators to be freeholders — and it was always a question whether a settler holding and occupying land under an article of agreement could rightfully vote for Assemblyman or a member of Congress. Such were some of the financial and political problems of early times on the Holland Purchase.



CHAPTER X.

PIONEERS.

"A road which advanced the settlement of Chautauqua County rapidly was started on the shore of Lake Erie at the mouth of Cattaraugus Creek and ran southwestward to the Pennsylvania line where it joined the long road from the Canoe Place on the Sin-nemah-on-ging which David Ellicott had cut through the Holland Company's Pennsylvania lands in the Six Districts", writes Paul D. Evans.

This work was done in 1804 and 1805. Joseph had recommended his brother David to the company to survey and lay out this road, and he was so employed until 1806. It will be remembered that he had worked with his brother Benjamin and Ebenezer Cary in surveying the southwestern part of the Holland Purchase of New York. He was a most eccentric individual; but mild and agreeable in disposition, much like the sweet tempered Benjamin in this respect. And he, as well as the other children of Joseph and Judith Ellicott, possessed remarkable talent. It is possible that David's mind was affected by the loss of his wife and four children, who all died young. In 1807 David was in Philadelphia with his brother Joseph, and after settling his accounts with the Company, he went to Maryland where he paid all his debts and disappeared. There were many rumors that he had been seen in different parts of the country. One was that a man named Ellicott was on the coast of North Carolina engaged in salt making. His mother mourned and his brothers especially Joseph, never gave up their efforts to find out what had become of David. Joseph wrote to most of the postoffices in the United States, inquiring if

David Ellicott had been seen or heard of. The mysterious disappearance of his peculiar but much loved brother was one of the great sorrows of Joseph Ellicott's life and he left no clue uninvestigated, but all to no avail; nothing was ever heard from David.

As the spring and summer of 1805 were very dry and the large grist-mill at Batavia had begun operations, both saw-mill and grist-mill were forced to shut down for lack of water, for nearly six weeks, in spite of Benjamin Ellicott's ingenious contrivances to conserve water.

When Joseph arrived in town about the middle of August, after a trip to Philadelphia, Baltimore and Ellicott's Mills, he was accompanied by two youthful nieces, Rachel Evans, his sister Letitia's daughter, and Alice Evans, daughter of his sister Ann. During his visit Joseph had confided to his mother that he needed two nieces to take charge of his house in Batavia, and she advised him to take Alice and Rachel as the most suitable of all her granddaughters to do the honors of his home which was always filled with guests, friends, and relatives, and distinguished people from other states and from abroad on their way to Niagara Falls over the miserable roads. [Mr. and Mrs. Paul Busti were among the guests entertained that year.] Most of the nieces and nephews of Joseph and Benjamin looked upon the Ellicott house in Batavia as home; and there was much gaiety and good fellowship in it.

Among the many records of travel on the Genesee Road that of Timothy Bigelow, as given in his journal of "A Tour to Niagara Falls in the Year 1805," approaches perhaps more nearly than any other to a description of the old highway. "We breakfasted at Hosmers in Hartford (Avon). Had good coffee and excellent tea, loaf sugar, mutton chops, waffles, berry pie, preserved berries, excellent bread, butter, and a salad of young onions. I mention the particulars because some of the articles of such a collation were

hardly to be expected in the depths of the wilderness. Within a mile of Hosmers, we passed the Genesee River. Where we crossed there is a new bridge, apparently strong and well built.

"To Gansons [one and a half miles east of LeRoy]. Gansons is a miserable log house. Obtained an ordinary dinner.

"To Russell's in Batavia, twelve miles. Within six miles of Batavia the road is much better, the land is a good quality and heavily timbered all the way, but especially near the settlement. It is but three years since this spot was first cleared, and it is now a considerable village. Here is a large building nearly finished intended for a Court House, Jail and Hotel under the same roof. The street is perfectly level, and is already a good and smooth road. Here is also an excellent mill situated on the Tonawanda Creek. Russell's (the old snake's den) is a poor tavern. We were told that our sheets were clean, for they had been slept in but a few times since they were washed."

"Russell's Tavern (half log, half framed) stood on the southwest corner of State and Genesee (Main) Streets as early as the year 1803."—Beers Gazetteer.

There is an amusing story told by the historian Col. William Seaver concerning Russell's Tavern. Seaver was recording the happenings of 1806. Evidently the place had not improved since the year before, for he writes, "up to that time and possibly to a still later period, a great portion of the present most central and compact part of our village was a swamp (Seaver wrote his delightful History of Batavia in 1849) wet land, sometimes called a frog-pond. The ground on which Russell's Tavern stood together with a small place on the opposite side of the street was called 'the island.' By way of illustrating the peculiar attractions of this island and swamp Daniel B. Brown, Esq., was fond of relating the anecdote, that not long before Stephen Russell had enlarged his tavern on The Island, some travelers, of whom two were ladies, put up at the

house for the night. It being a warm and pleasant evening in the spring, precisely such an one as frogs delight to celebrate with their nocturnal songs, that innumerable subterranean choir poured forth their loudest notes from a thorough bass of original masculine windhamites up to the shrill pipings of their degenerate offspring. After listening for awhile to this unearthly melody with which the whole surrounding forest resounded, one of the ladies exclaimed, 'well, if I was destined to spend my life in Batavia, I should at once pray to Jupiter Pluvius to turn me into a frog.'

"But the scene is changed. That island has lost its identity—the swamp has risen from its lowly bed, like the lion when he shakes the dew-drops from his mane,—and its submarine inhabitants have been driven before the march of civilization until scarce a descendant of the innumerable host is left to cheer our waking hours with his matin notes, or lull us to repose with his evening song."

To resume Timothy Bigelow's account of his journey: "July 23 to Luke's for breakfast, five miles west of Batavia. Luke's consisted of a single room of logs about twelve feet square with a lean-to behind, which served for a kitchen. Taverns like Luke's are not uncommon in this vicinity; almost every hut we saw had a sign hung out on a pole or stump, announcing that it was an inn."

Continuing Timothy Bigelow's account of his journey: "The woods are full of new settlers. Axes are resounding and trees literally falling as we pass. In one instance we were obliged to pass in a field through the smoke and flame of the trees which had lately been felled and were just fired."

"To Vanderventer's (between Akron and Clarence), thirteen miles. We had intended only to dine here; but by reason of a thunder shower, and the temptation of comfortable accommodations, we concluded not to proceed until the next day. Our last stage was through the Batavia Woods, famed for their horrors,

which were not abated by our having been informed at Russell's that not far from here a white man had been lately killed by the Indians. We found the road much better than we had anticipated. July 23, to Ransom's [Clarence] to breakfast. To Crow's at Buffalo, eight miles."

The pioneer farmers of the Purchase had their social occasions and festivities as well as the inhabitants of settlements like Batavia and Buffalo. Anna Spencer Stone Foster gave Turner the historian this account of festivities in the log houses and taverns: "There were inhabitants enough near Batavia in 1805 to make an agreeable neighborhood. We used to have ox-sled rides out to Uncle Gid Dunham's Tavern (Dunham's Corners) where we used to avail ourselves of the services of the left-handed fiddler, Russell Noble. Sometimes we went to the log house of some settler, each one contributing some article of food for the feast, the aggregate making a rustic meal. At a husking frolic, which I attended, near Palmyra, when a young girl, we had a pot-pie baked in a five-pail kettle, composed of thirteen fowls, as many squirrels, and due proportions of beef, mutton and venison. And there was also baked meat, beans and pumpkin pie. Frolics in the evening usually attended husking bees, raisings, quiltings and pumpkin parings. Everyone was social, friendly obliging. Hunting stories were told. There was singing, there was dancing on a split basswood floor, snap and catch 'em, jumping the broomstick and hunt the squirrel. All joined in the rustic sports. I used to dance with Peter and Augustus Porter, Thomas Morris, Dr. Atwater and many others of distinction when a young girl."

Many years after, a Batavia poet, John H. Yates, pictured these pioneer days in his homely verse:

"I hear the echo of the woodman's stroke
Resounding through the isles of forest gray;
The crash of giant elm and sturdy oak,
As they for towns and fertile fields make way.

"I hear the postman as he hastens here
From forest op'nings, where the blue smoke curled,
O'er winding pathways desolate and drear,
Where now are beaten highways of the world.

"The breaking twigs in thickets dense I hear,
Where stealthy panther creeps upon his prey;
The victim's struggle and his cries of fear,
Which fainter grow and die at last away.

"I hear the whirring of the spinning wheel,
The crackling of the logs on fireplace bright,
The scythe-stone grinding on the blade of steel,
The owl complaining through the lonely night.

"I hear the merriment of olden times,
The apple parings and the husking bees;
The laughter ringing out like merry chimes
From rustic haunts beneath the forest trees."

Concerning the pioneer housekeeping implements for making cloth and so forth, George Tomlinson of Batavia wrote the following: "Among the items in an inventory of articles composing a setting out of the daughter of a prominent and wealthy citizen of Genesee County was the following: one loom and harness, reeds, shuttles, spools, swifts and warping bars; one spinning wheel and reel; one flax wheel with distaffs and flax and tow cards; one pounding barrel and pounder; two dozen candle rods. This was a duplicate of the wedding presents given each of his four daughters as their marriage outfit. It was substantially the equipment of each well-to-do household, and what is more, these articles were not for ornament. The girls were educated to their use, and when they went to housekeeping they could spin and weave both woolen and linen for flannel or full cloth, for their husbands, and dresses for themselves, which were frequently composed of linen and wool. Many pieces

of striped or plaid flannel were made for 'meeting dresses.' Every woman and girl had her knitting work, and mittens and stockings were knit at home.

"Shoemaking was done in the house by a cobbler who journeyed from one house to another, with lasts, bench, and all his tools used in making shoes for men and women and children. A tailoress came next, and, with the assistance of the women of the household, cut and made the winter clothes for the boys and men. Of course the very wealthy families obtained much of their wearing apparel from the fashionable shops of New York and Philadelphia and even from abroad, but their transportation onto the Purchase was still difficult."

The main road from Batavia to Buffalo was none too good in 1805 for Turner states that "It took the Hawks family three days to move one load of household goods with a yoke of oxen and a wagon from Batavia to Williamsville, thirty miles."

Horseback riding was rapid transportation in those days, but Joseph Ellicott firmly believed that the main arteries of trade would be waterways very soon; and in this year of 1805 he made plans for the development of the harbor at Buffalo. But the Company would not cooperate with him as Mr. Busti believed that the work should be done by the state or federal government. As early as 1803 Ellicott had laid out and platted a town on the shore of Lake Ontario at the mouth of Oak Orchard Creek and called it Manila, but there was almost no settlement in Orleans County previous to 1807. However, the road from Batavia northward to the lake was an early project as it was then expected that Manila and Lewiston would be the depots of lake traffic.

Martha E. Tyson, daughter of George Ellicott, of Ellicott's Lower Mills, wrote the following interesting account of a visit to her Aunt Judith Ellicott at the Upper Mills, in 1807: "Aunt Judith had been very ill of plurisy, and my mother desiring to pay her respects,

allowed me to accompany her. Attended by a servant, and all on horseback, we reached her home by a narrow road, which, after crossing the Patapsco a mile above the Tarpean Rock, kept close to the bank of that stream until it reached our place of destination. We found the venerable lady in her chamber, an apartment on the left of the front entrance. She was much pleased to see my mother, and received us affectionately. She was seated in a large easy chair, by a bright wood fire, which burned on the hearth merrily. She was dressed in the style of a Friend, and her clothing was either white or some pale color. She conversed freely on subjects of interest, and of all the attentions which she had received from her children and grand children in the sickness from which she had recently recovered; but appeared to feel the absence of her sons, Cousins Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott, who, from 1800, had resided in the state of New York. She loved to speak of them, lamented the loss of their society, but would not leave her old home and accept Joseph's oft repeated invitation to take up her abode with him. I admired the quiet dignity of her appearance and manners. Her face had a marked outline; her nose was inclined to aquiline, and the expression of her countenance was firm, but gentle and thoughtful. Her daughter Ann Evans, the wife of Joseph Evans, who has his residence about a mile above, and Rachel Evans, the wife of Lewis Evans, whose home was close at hand, and Hannah, only daughter of the latter, were with her. Hannah Evans was then a child of uncommon grace and loveliness. The tender affection, which was conspicuous in all of them for their widowed parent, impressed me at the time as having great beauty in it. Her house presented a perfect pattern of neatness and order; the furniture was of the olden time, but in excellent preservation. The rooms were lined with wainscoting, without paint, and beautifully clean and white from frequent scrubbing. My mother asked one of my cousins to show me the large

hall which adjoined the apartment in which we sat. It was a fine room and had been built to accommodate the great clock, but as that remarkable piece of mechanism had been removed to Batavia some time before, by her sons Joseph and Benjamin to whom she had given it, its place was now vacant. After the completion of our visit, we returned home by the same route."



CHAPTER XI.

SOCIETY IN THE EARLY DAYS.

Several mills were built on the Tonawanda three miles west of Batavia by William Bush, who moved to the mill-seat from Bloomfield in 1806. His wife, Lovisa Post Bush, a young school teacher of Bloomfield, he had married a short time previous to moving to Batavia. They arrived in the month of May. History records this of Mrs. Bush: "She patiently and courageously took up her abode in a rude log cabin in the dense forest and well fulfilled all the duties of life". We know that she was a plucky, cheerful young woman much admired and respected by the ladies of the neighboring settlement who often rode out to Bushville mills to exercise their horses and chat with Lovisa Bush. [Of course they were always accompanied by a manservant.] The first summer at Bushville Lovisa did the cooking for the family and hired men by an outdoor fire-place built against a stump.

The tiny log house had no chimney—there was no time to build one, for a mill dam and saw mill must be completed before winter set in. When a very old man William Bush told this story to his son-in-law, Turner, the historian of the Holland Purchase: "The first winter at Bushville I tended the sawmill, working it from daylight to dark. I cut our fire-wood and foddered the stock by lantern light. Before winter set in I built a chimney of sticks and plastered the cracks between the logs of our cabin. And I got an acre of land cleared about the house, just enough to prevent the trees from falling upon it. When the mill was built I had it paid for, but it took all I had saved while I lived in Bloomfield [ten years]—in fact everything we had except our scanty household furniture. But

the sawmill proved a good investment. Boards were very much in demand at \$7.50 a thousand. The settlers stocked the mill with logs to be sawed on shares. In 1808 I built a carding and cloth dressing establishment and carded the first pound of wool by machinery and dressed the first piece of cloth thus finished on the Holland Purchase. The settlers came with their wool and cloth from as far west as the Niagara Frontier to my place.

"I built a grist mill in 1809 and a paper mill and a distillery in 1817 and manufactured the first ream of paper west of the Genesee River. During my milling operations I was clearing up the farm.

"Coming into the woods as we did, dependent on the labor of our hands, in the first twenty years we accumulated some fifteen or sixteen thousand dollars.

"The machinist of the present day may be interested to know how I procured machinery. I bought my hand shears of the Shakers of New Lebanon, my press plate at a furnace in Onondaga (Syracuse), my dye kettle, press paper, etc., in Albany. My transportation bill for these things was over two hundred dollars.

"When I came to Bushville in 1806 only three settlers lived between my place and Batavia village; Sutherland, Davis and Washburn. The two McCrackens, Rufus and Daniel, lived west of me."

William H. Bush died in 1852 at the age of seventy-nine years. His wife Lovisa Post Bush died two years earlier and both are buried among their pioneer friends and neighbors in old Batavia Cemetery.

"In 1807 the majority of settlers on the Purchase were Democrats from Vermont, where there had been no property restrictions for suffrage. However, the Federalists determined to cut down the vote against them though their supremacy had passed when Jefferson was elected President in 1800. But in the spring election of 1807 they placed challengers at the voting places in Genesee County. The New Englanders, not suspecting any trouble, came to vote, some

from many miles over almost impassable roads, only to meet the challengers and be ordered to produce evidence that they were freeholders [i. e. that they had land deeds and not articles].”

* Mr. Ellicott in a letter to Busti dated May 22, 1807, concludes the story as follows: “The consequence was that more quarreling and blows passed which occasioned bloody noses and black eyes than have been seen ever, since the sale of the Company’s Lands.

“Though Busti had no sympathy for American Democracy, he was obliged to yield to Ellicott’s request concerning deeds being issued to trustworthy settlers for improved lands. But it was not until 1819 that all settlers, whose characters and improvements gave reasonable hope of their ability to pay their indebtedness, were offered deeds in place of their former contracts.”

Joseph Ellicott’s nieces were much too attractive to remain single very long and he was obliged to relinquish Alice to the care of a young friend of his, William Peacock, on October 3, 1807.

Mr. Ellicott had known William for four years and had the utmost confidence in him. “The bride and groom accompanied by Rachel Evans and many other young gentlemen and ladies of Batavia rode on horseback from that village to Buffalo where they were married. Chauncey Loomis, who was in Buffalo at the time, was invited to be one of the company; it was on this occasion that he first saw Rachel Evans, his future wife. The young ladies were chaperoned by Mrs. Elizabeth Foot, the aunt of one of them, Lucy Grant. Lucy afterwards married one of the Ellicott nephews, David Ellicott Evans. [She was his first wife.]

“After taking a bridal tour with their attendants, all on horseback, to Canada and Niagara Falls, they returned to Batavia, as the groom was one of the clerks in the Land Office. They lived in Batavia until

* Paul D. Evans’ “The Holland Land Company.”

1810 and then moved to Mayville, Chautauqua County, New York, Mr. Peacock having been appointed local agent there for the disposal of the Holland Company's lands, subject to the ratification of Joseph Ellicott. James Brisbane and Mary Lucy Stevens were another couple married that same year.

"Alice Evans Peacock lived a long, useful and happy life. She was no ordinary woman; her mental and physical powers were active and vigorous, and both were always exerted to promote the happiness of others. In her religious views, she was a firm, sincere and constant Friend. Her hand, her heart, her purse were ever open to aid and extend Christian work. [The family considered her strikingly like her great grandmother Ann Bye Ellicott Wall.]"

The first newspaper printed in Genesee County came out in the spring of 1807 at Batavia and was called "The Genesee Intelligencer". It had a subscription list of one hundred and Joseph Ellicott was one of the subscribers. He gave the paper three columns of advertising for the Holland Land Company. The paper was printed on a half sheet of medium size as remembered by Benjamin Blodgett, and contained an account of an elopement and of a runaway apprentice boy for whose apprehension a bag of bran was offered as a reward. There was no other advertising.

"The paper was a sorry looking thing," writes Mr. Blodgett, "its mechanical execution being so bad that it would have puzzled a Philadelphia lawyer to find out what it was. I ought to have preserved a copy—it would be looked upon by the craft of this day [November 26, 1846] not only as a literary but a mechanical curiosity. The editor and publisher, Elias Williams, becoming disheartened at the shabby appearance of his paper, and about to fail for lack of funds, induced me to go into partnership with him. Anxious to see my name at the head of a newspaper, as Printer, Publisher and Editor, too, of 'The Genesee Intelligencer', I embarked my all of this world's goods in the

enterprise, which amounted to the vast sum of \$48.75, the hard earnings of the summer before, as Pack-Horseman and Cook for the company of surveyors on the Holland Purchase—a pursuit better fitted to my capacity at that time than editor of the 'Genesee Intelligencer'.

"About the first of July, 1807, the firm of Williams and Blodgett resumed the publication of 'The Intelligencer' with an increased subscription list and advertising patronage. After publishing thirteen numbers, Williams went to Alexander [seven miles away] to attend a Military Review, and has never since been seen or heard of in this county. This unceremonious leave-taking of Williams put a mighty damper upon the prospects of Mr. Editor Blodgett, who instead of realizing the golden dreams he had anticipated, found himself involved in debt about \$300.00, flat on his back with the fever and ague, which continued about six months without intermission; and for the want of help, not being a practical printer himself, was obliged to abandon the publication of 'The Intelligencer'. However, in the spring of 1808, I rallied again, and in company with a man named Peck, I started the 'Cornucopia' with an enlarged sheet and new type under the firm name of Peck and Blodgett, with a subscription list of about three hundred."

The Cornucopia's subscription price was two dollars per annum if received by mail. Agents appointed to receive subscriptions were Asa Ransom, Clarence; Mr. Benjamin, Postmaster, Lewiston; James Ganson, Postmaster, Caledonia; William Bristol, Warsaw; John Scott, Chautauqua; David Eddy, Willink (East Aurora); and Louis Le Couteulx, Buffalo. Subscribers who received their paper at the office paid one dollar and seventy five cents.

The general stores of Batavia advertised in "The Cornucopia," viz. Ebenezer Cary, James Brisbane and E. Hart. They offered to pay cash for pot and pearl ashes, and Brisbane included whiskey, pork, wheat,

hides, tallow, butter, rye, corn, oats, hemp, flax and cheese.

The year 1808 was rather quiet in the eastern part of The Purchase but Batavia and the surrounding country improved rapidly. Mr. Ellicott's mind was much on Buffalo, for that village was made the county seat of a large Niagara County; by an act of the State Legislature it was set off from Genesee that year. The first session of court was held in June and Augustus Porter officiated as first judge. The Holland Company began the building of a court house at once.

In early times there was keen rivalry between that part of Buffalo on the Niagara River called Black Rock, which was on the mile strip which belonged to the State of New York, and the part known as Buffalo Creek or New Amsterdam, which was on the Holland Purchase. There was a natural landing place formed by an outcrop of dark colored limestone on the New York shore of Niagara River, near its head, which had been used from time immemorial by the Indians. Buffalo village of the Purchase had nothing in the nature of a port to compete with Black Rock, for entrance to Buffalo Creek from the open lake was unsheltered from storms and badly obstructed by a sand-bar. A great carrying trade had been opened by Porter, Barton & Company which gave importance to Black Rock and started the settlement around it quite threatening to the prosperity of Mr. Ellicott's ambitious town.

*"Before establishing his residence at Black Rock, Congressman Porter in 1809 had applied for the removal of the customs port of entry from Buffalo Creek to that place. The collector of the district, Mr. Granger, wrote a letter of remonstrance to the Secretary of the Treasury in which he claimed for Buffalo a population of forty three families besides unmarried men, while crediting to Black Rock no more than one white man and two black families, in addition to a temporary ferry house and tavern under the bank."

* J. N. Larned's "History of Buffalo."

The year 1809 was marked with disappointment and sorrow for the Ellicott family. Joseph Ellicott had intended that year to erect a magnificent mansion for himself and family on 'Outer Lot 104', but he abandoned the idea because of action taken by the trustees and highway commissioners of Buffalo Village, who forced a straightening of the street which he had curved. Prof. Ellicott Evans, a grand nephew of Joseph Ellicott, states in a paper read before the Buffalo Historical Society, that the purpose of Mr. Ellicott had been to create a place of beauty in the heart of the future city and bequeath it to the public at his death, which was quite in line with his well known generosity; had this splendid design been carried out, and if a mile long Ellicott Park had been preserved from manufacturing plants and railroads, Buffalo's East Side would have been one of the city's beauty spots. Mr. Ellicott's feelings were injured by this high-handed conduct of the village trustees, for he was very sensitive though few, even his relatives, realized it. The action of these officials clothed with petty brief authority probably retarded the growth of Buffalo for a score of years. Mr. Ellicott gave up all idea of improving the lot, and determined to continue his residence in Batavia among friends of taste and culture.

John F. Lay has truthfully observed: "It must be remembered that Batavia never was primitive in the sense of being illiterate. It abounded at the very outstart in men of ripest scholarship, the richest culture and most remarkable acumen. The opening woods were vocal with a wonderful command of English; and the tone of society in the village was baronial."

Owing to the death of his mother in the summer of 1809 Mr. Ellicott was absent from the Land Office for some time. Before leaving for Maryland he wrote out directions to be observed during his absence:

"Not any in or out lots are to be sold in Amsterdam called Buffalo, Mayville, Chautauqua County or Batavia Village during my absence."

Martha E. Tyson writes in her interesting family memoirs: "I was present at the funeral of Aunt Judith Ellicott in the summer of 1809. All the members of the Ellicott and Evans lineage within the state of Maryland were in attendance on this solemn occasion, as well as many persons of various religious sects and ranks in life Isaiah Balderson, a minister of the Society of Friends, of Baltimore, was present, and having been well acquainted with Aunt Judith, paid and affecting tribute to her virtue, and to the excellent and estimable qualities that had adorned her character, in the quiet and serious order observed by the Society of Friends; and those who had been the witnesses of her life, and her happy death, took comfort from the belief that she, who had been so long bereaved of her husband, had now gone to meet him. She rests by his side in the family burial place."

The First Presbyterian (then called Congregational) Church was organized at Batavia in 1809 with twelve members. Before that time pious people said: "The Sabbath does not extend west of the Genesee River."

On the nineteenth of September, 1809, the Rev. Royal Phelps, a missionary, preached in Jesse Rumsey's barn, and on the fifth of February, 1811, a public meeting was held at the Court House for the purpose of organizing the Congregational Corporation. The record was attested by a Moderator and clerk and acknowledged before Benjamin Ellicott, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and recorded by Simeon Cummings, County Clerk. For several years missionaries officiated irregularly and at long intervals. General Agent Busti, a devout Catholic, had been shocked to learn that in 1811 there was no church building in Batavia. There were several private schools, one of which was taught by Thomas Layton, who settled in Batavia in 1801.

"On August 7, 1810, DeWitt Clinton, afterwards governor of the State of New York, visited Joseph

Ellicott in Batavia to consult him regarding the route of the proposed Erie Canal. Both were enthusiastic advocates of the 'Big Ditch.' The Clinton party had arrived at Batavia from the west about six o'clock in the afternoon of August 6, having driven eleven miles from Richardson's Tavern (afterwards known as Brick House), in all having traveled thirty-two miles from Ransom's (Clarence) that day. The party in two coaches, followed by a baggage wagon and three servants, put up at Keys Tavern, a good house. Keys was one of the earliest taverns in Batavia. The log part of it was built in 1802 and additions made of frame later. It stood on the Brisbane property, now City Hall and Austin Park; and was the home of the early settlers whose business was with the Land Office. About the tavern's yard used to be seen the huge covered wagons that transported goods from Albany to Buffalo. It has already been noted Abel Rowe was the first tavern keeper. He located nearly opposite the present Land Office in 1801, but afterwards changed his location so that Mr. Ellicott could locate his tract of five hundred acres reserved by him. Rowe founded the Keys Stand, afterwards called Frontier House. Under the administration of Rowe, and afterwards Keys, the tavern was widely known in early times. Keys was the proprietor of a line of stage coaches.

*"Clinton expressed much admiration in his journal for Joseph Ellicott's methods in business and gives a vivid word picture of the Ellicott home and garden, where among many other flowers grew 'the largest poppies I ever saw.' He continues: 'We examined Ellicott's musical clock, made by his father, the senior Joseph Ellicott, who was assisted in the work by his eldest son Andrew, then fourteen years of age. Afterwards Andrew became surveyor-general of the United States. On one side of the clock was designated the second, the minute, the day, the month and the year.

* "Tavern Tales of the Early Trails of Western New York," by Clara L. T. Williams.

On another side an orrery, working out the revolutions of the planets and their satellites. On a third side of the clock was the musical machinery which plays twenty-four tunes. The mechanical execution is admirable as is also the mahogany case and paintings on the face of the machine.'

"The future governor continued with these items: 'Batavia contains a Court House, built by the Holland Land Company for ten thousand dollars, a post office and fifty houses, several stores and taverns. A newspaper called the "Cornucopia" is published here.'

"Clinton concluded his notes concerning Batavia as follows: 'Tonawanda Creek runs through the town and has on its waters an excellent grist and saw-mill. Batavia is the capital of the Holland Purchase and the seat of the Land Office from which all deeds for land of the Company are issued.' "

John Mellish, a traveler of the following year says: "I visited Joseph Ellicott, the agent, who favored me with a great variety of useful information. The settlers are mostly from New England and they give tone to the manners and habits of the people. The town is laid out in lots of twenty rods front and one mile deep and they sold originally for five dollars per acre."

The village of Buffalo maintained a steady growth despite the rivalry of "The Rock" for in 1811 there was a population of at least four hundred with about one hundred dwelling houses, three taverns, a stone jail, an unfinished wooden court house, and a small building which served for a school house, and a meeting house used as a community center. That year the "Buffalo Gazette," a small sheet, was launched. It was the third newspaper printed farther west in the state than Canandaigua, "The Genesee Intelligencer" having appeared in Batavia in 1807, followed by "The Cornucopia" in 1808.

Rachel Evans lived with her uncles, Joseph and Benjamin, in their Batavia home for five years. Then she married Chauncey Loomis at the family home, but

as he was owner of much real estate in Bennington, Wyoming County, the young couple soon went there to live on a large farm. This wedding occurred in 1810 and the bachelor brothers missed her sorely.

This story is told by Judge Arad Thomas in a history of Orleans County written about eighty years ago: "A stranger drove up to the tavern of Oliver Booth in Gaines soon after it was built in 1811. Stopping at the west front door the visitor requested dinner for himself and a stable with feed for his horse. Mrs. Booth prepared his dinner, while her young daughter took him to the stables. Having put up the horse the stranger entered the inn and engaged in conversation with the landlady. 'How do you like the Holland Purchase, Mrs. Booth?' was his first inquiry, to which she gave an amiable and non-committal answer.

"'How is it at the mouth of Oak Orchard? Are they settling there fast?' 'No, they are not', was the quick reply. 'That cussed old Joe Ellicott has reserved all the land there and he won't sell it. The devilish old scamp has one or two thousand acres as a harbor for bears and wolves which kill the sheep and hogs of us settlers.'

"The stranger continued to lead the good hostess in her conversation, motioning for silence to another man who chanced to enter the tavern. When he pressed her as to Joe Ellicott's possible reasons for holding back the land, she flared out with the present-day slang word, 'The old scamp thinks he will make his Jack out of it. He thinks a city will grow up there some day and he will survey the land into city lots and sell them. He's a long-headed old chap,' she answered, proving that the wiles of real estate agents were not unknown to the pioneers.

"When the visitor had finished his dinner and departed chuckling, Mrs. Booth asked her remaining guest who the fine gentleman was who had conversed so intelligently with her and she was told that it was Joseph Ellicott of Batavia. History records that Mrs.

Booth's only comment was 'Good, Didn't I give it to him? Glad of it.' "

Joseph Ellicott's grand-nephew, Professor Ellicott Evans, son of David Ellicott Evans, told another story which he heard when a small boy from his uncle Joseph's own lips. The story proves that Joseph Ellicott could appreciate a joke even when the joke was on himself. "He was fond of the society of the young, and one of my own earliest recollections was hearing him in his own house, relate an anecdote to a young visitor. It was an account of one of his meetings with Red Jacket (the famous Indian orator), and it was characteristic of that chief. I shall make no apology for relating it. It is well known that Red Jacket was extremely jealous of the progressing settlement of the country by the white man, feeling that it was the beginning of the extinction of his people. This feeling made him very unfriendly to Mr. Ellicott, whom he naturally regarded in this respect as the chief enemy of his race. Still he was always courteous. On one occasion Mr. Ellicott met him in Tonawanda Swamp and they sat down together on a log. After a few moments of silence, which Mr. Ellicott knowing Indian habits, did not interrupt, Red Jacket exclaimed, 'Move along Joe.' The request was granted, and after a few minutes of silence it was repeated. This occurred several times until Mr. Ellicott had moved to the extremity of the log. After the usual pause the order came again, 'Joe move along.' Mr. Ellicott replied that he was at the end of the log and could move no farther. 'That,' said Red Jacket, 'is the way the white man treats us. He first says move along a little, then a little more, and when we have moved as far as we can, he shoves us out of the world.' "



CHAPTER XII.

INCIDENTS OF THE WAR OF 1812.

The years 1810 and 1811 were rife with rumors of a second war with Great Britain, persistent enough to agitate the country. Commerce of the United States and the mother country remained prohibited, and American ships were blockaded, while the impressment of American sailors continued. The New York State authorities, knowing the exposed condition of the frontier, began to make some preparations for its defence. A contract was made with Joseph Ellicott to erect an arsenal for the storage of arms and ammunition. The building was of hewn logs and was situated above the bend of the creek, on the Alexander Road. *Near the close of the war a great stone arsenal was built at the west end of the village. The work was superintended by Major Isaac Sutherland. The war was not popular with the Federalist Party, and but a small portion of the Democratic Party favored it.

President Madison's proclamation was announced on June 19, 1812; carried by express riders it reached Fort Niagara on the 26th. The expresses told the news as they passed upon the main roads, the Buffalo Road and the Batavia and Lewiston Road, and thence it spread in every direction from settlement to settlement.

The news of the declaration of war had reached Canada twelve hours before it was received upon our frontier. John Jacob Astor had sent an express from New York City, announcing to Thomas Clark, Esq., of Queenston, the proclamation. The name of the British express rider was Vosburg. On his return he was arrested and jailed in Canandaigua. This measure

* Stone was being hauled for the arsenal in 1813. See page 164 of "The Genesee Country," by John Kennedy.

of John Jacob Astor's was for the protection and safety of cargoes of fur that might be coming down the lakes.

"At Buffalo the citizens were first aware of the existence of war by the capture of a small vessel, which had just started from Black Rock, with a load of salt, bound up the lakes. The vessel, cargo and crew were taken to Fort Erie. The tidings of all this did not fail to reach the greater portion of Western New York simultaneously with the news of the declaration of war. All was bustle and confusion . . . Batavia was soon converted from a quiet country village into a military rendezvous. Then was heard there the constant rolling of the drum, the shrill tones of the fife, the din of weapons of war, the rattling of the wheels of baggage wagons; troops were arriving and departing in constant succession . . .

"Such was the state of alarm upon the Holland Purchase, that Mr. Ellicott deemed it necessary to quiet it by an address to the settlers dated on the Fourth of July, in which he assured them of the effectual guarding of the lines, and of the safety of the whole region from invasion."—Turner.

The story of the War of 1812 is too well known to require repetition, but some of Mr. Ellicott's writings contain illuminating sidelights which may be of interest and a few extracts from his letters follow: "There is now a Captain Scott in this village recruiting for five-years soldiers. He has within a few days recruited eight. I learn that those who have any flour to carry to Canada from the mouth of Genesee River find no difficulty in carrying it wherever they choose. I begin to be of the opinion that non-intercourse and embargo is all Stuff! Stuff! Stuff! The Madisonian administration is truly a contemptable administration, it is neither one thing or another, it is all a kind of haphazard thing, without any general system. Sometimes it is embargo, and a great noise about war, then a non-intercourse . . . then a to-do about war, then non-intercourse, then embargo . . . then a perpetual session of Congress. On

the whole, although I have supported with an undeviating hand all these Petticoat Measures, I must say I begin to be Sick of it. Infatuation is leaving me, and I hope I shall have firmness enough to withstand the party bawling that is the case at every election."

Late in the fall of 1812 Mr. Ellicott determined to build a shelter for travelers on the Ridge Road, which had been opened that year, and wrote the following letter concerning the project:

"Batavia, November 26, 1812.

"Mr. Freeman, Dear Sir:—Being about to erect a log building on the Ridge Road, say sixty rods north of the Guide Board, I shall have occasion for three thousand feet of boards, or thereabouts, to place it in a situation for a family to reside in it.

"I have been induced to erect this House for the accommodation of the public, rather than for private interests. The distance between Houses is so great along that part of the Ridge Road that people in the Winter Season sometimes suffer with Cold. I hope sir, you will deliver the following Bill of Boards at the place where Abel Harrington is about to build the said House by the period he may stand in need of them..."

Mr. Ellicott's nephews, Andrew A. and John B. Ellicott, and other young men connected with the Land Office, enlisted and served in the War of 1812.

John F. Lay told a very amusing story of James W. Stevens, early clerk at the Land Office, who served for a time on the staff of General Porter, as his Adjutant-General: "Among the duties of his office was the locating and setting up of the headquarters tent. On one occasion the enemy seemed disposed to disturb the peaceful orderly procedure of going into camp. The discreet limb of the law rode back to his general and made the following report; 'General, the bullets are flying over there; it is positively dangerous to proceed with setting up that tent, I shall surely be killed if I tarry in that locality.' The irate general at once discharged the full vials of his wrath upon his cautious

penman and mouthpiece: 'Go back immediately, sir, and proceed with your duties; it is your duty to direct the setting up of that tent.' But the judge had not studied law in vain; he had very clear notions of the limitations of jurisdictions, prerogatives, duties, vested rights, inalienable privileges, and other world-controlling abstractions and distinctions. Though prudent and discreet in regard to the enemy's bullets, he was nevertheless a very lion where his own rights seemed to be trenched upon. Drawing himself up with great dignity he proceeded to lay down the law of the matter to the very face of his testy commander. 'General Porter, sir, I would have you to understand that I am your WRITING aid, not your FIGHTING aid.' "

For some time Mr. Ellicott had been somewhat annoyed at the vicious attacks of a Federalist partisan, Daniel B. Brown, a lawyer, who preached on Sundays at the Court House. He was an eloquent speaker, a graduate of Yale College.

"Brown is reputed to have been one of the most brilliant advocates who ever practiced in this county. He was somewhat intemperate in his habits (in his speech), and erratic in disposition, and consequently, never won for himself a position which he otherwise would have gained."—Beer's "Gazetteer of Genesee County."

Being prominent in the councils of the Federalist Party, he opposed the War of 1812. He hated Joseph Ellicott because he was a Democrat, and probably their high tempers clashed.

The following is a sample effusion over the signature of Quietus (doubtless a pen-name of Daniel Bishop Brown): "The old Federal cat's-paw, that whining, canting, clamorous, old demagogue who waded up to his chin in the mire of folly and absurdity, it appears has, in consequence, subscribed an unqualified submission for the present, and it is now to be hoped that he will suffer himself and the county to enjoy a short interval of repose. After so long guarding the rights

and liberties of the people in the true spirit of love and disinterested patriotism (as is manifest from his late endeavor to impose on them the additional burden of paying the taxes of certain non-resident land holders), it appears that he is now about to abdicate the sovereignty of the county; or as the most illustrious of the quiddical orators has happily expressed it, 'rather than be buffeted he'll throw down his hat, and resign the reins of the party into the hands of the people.'

"Should his excessive love for the people ever again stimulate him to action, it will be necessary for him to digest some new and efficient system of offensive operation and resume with renovated vigor his old trade of scouring the county, for the purpose of influencing the minds of the people; he must adopt more energetic measures, and endeavor by new artifices and stratagems, new twisting and maneuvering, to whine and screw himself into a comfortable berth among the fat offices in that niche of eminence and distinction to which his feverish ambition aspires." This tirade was probably directed at Mr. Ellicott.

On the other hand a friend who had known Mr. Ellicott intimately for many years wrote of him: "A better man than Joseph Ellicott never lived;" and again, "Joseph Ellicott is one of nature's greatest men . . . an extraordinarily great and good man."

Another said of him: "A just man possessed of a strong will—impatient of opposition—of a quick temper and wielding great power. It is remarkable that so few have occasion to complain of him."

The story of his life revealed by his letters and theirs prove him the soul of affectionate generosity to his relatives and friends.

"Buffalo suffered little from the War of 1812 until the eleventh of July, 1813, a Sunday morning, when the British made their first visit just before daylight. They landed about two hundred and fifty men below Black Rock, surprised the small navy yard which had been established at Scajaquada Creek, burned several

barrack buildings and a block house, and came near capturing General Porter, who was then at home. The general made his escape through the woods to Buffalo and assisted in rallying the militia and volunteers, who with the help of thirty Indians, led by Farmer's Brother, met the invaders at about the point where Niagara Street makes its turn on reaching the river, and drove them back. Their retreat was disorderly and they were hotly pursued. They lost no less than a hundred men, killed, wounded and missing, while the Americans lost five wounded and three killed. The American forces had been augmented that spring by the assistance of Red Jacket, who for once cast his influence in favor of the United States."—Larned's "History of Buffalo."

During the summer and fall the operations of the War did not directly affect the Holland Purchase.

On September 1, 1813, Andrew Ellicott was appointed professor of mathematics in the military academy at West Point and moved from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to that place soon after.

The following letter of thanks from Mrs. Andrew Ellicott to her brother-in-law Joseph Ellicott is taken from Catherine Van Cortlandt Matthews' work, "Andrew Ellicott, His Life and Letters."

West Point, November 17, 1813.

"My best of brothers: To apologize for not writing sooner would take up too much time, as it is rather late. Mr. Ellicott is gone to bed, in health, but rather fatigued, and indeed we have had a somewhat troublesome time, but as we are safe in the West Point Fort, we must forget troubles and be thankful as we believe it is for our future benefit. It seems a duty to me to give our best of friends a little information of our proceedings. It cannot be interesting to anyone excepting those who have proved to be interested in our welfare.

"We sold our furniture, which came to about one hundred and ten pounds (trifling things sold well, but valuable things went off at less than half price), which with the two hundred dollars which you sent

Andrew, and fifty of mine which I had saved, paid our rent and other debts. We made an attempt to sell a number of books, but found no purchasers if they happened to be bid up to half their value; we found it necessary to bring them on with a number of boxes of instruments, which took more than one wagon; we filled the second with our beds, clothing, desk, two card tables, stone table, one looking glass, my rocking chair, wheel and reel. Our moving altogether cost us more than three hundred dollars. We gave the wagoners about fifty dollars at starting, and Mr. Griffith settled the rest, and not only that, but purchased all our kitchen furniture with some other necessities before we arrived at New York. He laid in a little store for our beginning which happened very well as we cannot purchase scarcely anything at present at this place, but it is expected to be very much better next summer. We arrived here last Saturday but Mr. Ellicott has not yet had an answer from Mr. Armstrong how or where he is to receive his pay, but he expects to have information soon.

"We found a tolerable good rough house prepared for us, and I believe we shall be very comfortable, when we have it in our power to lay in a good winter's store. I find it is customary for the officers to receive pay for their rations and provide in what way they choose for themselves. Two servants allowed, but we shall do without one and receive allowance for the other. We intend to live in a very frugal way, and I am in hopes, the savings of the first year will clear up with Mr. Griffith.

"I have not seen any butter since our arrival, but have a prospect of some next week. There are four families at this place, the French teacher has a family, the appointed doctor has a family, a widow Tomson has two or three very fine daughters. She boards about thirty of the cadets. We have about ninety soldiers stationed and about ninety cadets; the latter have vacation next month until March, not more than

twelve will spend the winter here. It really is the most romantic place I ever beheld. We have not yet been out of the house, it has been so very cold, the snow is two inches deep. The thermometer stood for three days below freezing point.

"Nancy (Ann) is with us but returns in three or four weeks to New York. I most sincerely wish you, Letty and John, could spend some time with us next summer. You would find soldier's fair and hearty welcome from your affectionate sister

"Sarah Ellicott."

The 30th of December, 1813, saw the whole of Niagara frontier laid waste by British regulars and their blood-thirsty allies. Lewiston and Buffalo were completely destroyed and some of their citizens killed. But *most* of the inhabitants of these villages had fled in haste, some into the forest, others by roads and trails to neighboring towns. Many Lewiston people were aided to escape by their good neighbors, the Tuscarora Indians. In Buffalo nine prisoners were killed after the fighting had ceased, including Mrs. Lovejoy, who had offered some resistance to the British Indians who were pillaging her house. Her near neighbor, Mrs. St. John, a widow, was the one resident of Buffalo who saved her home. Sending her children away, in care of some of her fleeing friends, Mrs. St. John remained at her home and secured an Indian guard to protect the house. This dwelling, the stone jail, a blacksmith shop, and the frame of a barn, were the only buildings left at the end of three days' work of destruction. Lewiston was almost entirely destroyed, the only structures left standing being one small brick house (now covered with clapboards), the stone walls of Jonas Harrison's dwelling and Solomon Gillett's log stable.

No sooner had the enemy departed than some of the natives returned to Buffalo and began to plan for temporary shelter from the rigors of winter; but the greater number found refuge at Williamsville, Batavia

and other hospitable places near and far. The winter was a nightmare of fear and suffering along the entire frontier. A frenzied exodus began on that dreadful December day; militia, citizens, ox sleds, wagons, men and women on horseback, children and infants, Indians, wounded soldiers on sledges, most of the population of the frontier, united in one purpose—to reach a safety zone from the hands of the British.

On reaching Batavia the fugitives rested, considering it a safe distance from pursuers. The officers took possession of Joseph Ellicott's home for their headquarters. Some of them went to Keys Tavern and the Brisbane mansion. They converted Ellicott's office into a hospital. Nearly every house in the village was thrown open to the sick, suffering and wounded. Mrs. James Brisbane, formerly Miss Mary Lucy Stevens, eagerly promised General Scott that she would find food for his soldiers if they would protect her family. Mr. Brisbane was commissary at the time and away from home. Her two children, Albert and George, were small boys. On horseback, accompanied by two men-servants, similarly mounted, she rode for miles through the trails of the wilderness buying provisions for the soldiers who were camped back of her home (the spot is now Austin Park). When the scattered settlers hesitated about selling supplies, she always persuaded them to change their minds.

Among the fleeing people of the frontier who passed through Batavia not tarrying long was Mrs. Solomon Gillett of Lewiston, who had seen her home burned and one of her children, a boy seven years of age, killed and scalped by the Indian allies of the British. She had escaped from the English soldiers, and nearly crazed by grief was making her way, mostly on foot, across the state to her father's home in Columbia County on the eastern bank of the Hudson. She was carrying a baby and leading her four-year-old son, Alfred.

*“Words are inadequate to describe the sufferings of that journey, sufferings from cold, hunger and weariness. Two hundred and seventy miles across the state, over miserable roads she tramped, begging her way. Occasionally she rode a short distance on the ox sled of some farmer. Most people were kind when they heard her sad story, and willing to give food and shelter; and some (including the Ellicotts) added warm clothing, encouraging words, and even a little money to pay her way. Others refused to believe her story and gave her only sneers and insults. One careful housewife said, ‘You can’t stay here over night; you’re probably lousy.’ The unfortunate woman was too nearly exhausted to travel farther that night, and made a bed for herself and children in a haystack by the roadside. They were far from comfortable, having suffered from frost-bitten fingers and toes for some time; on this night hunger was added to their discomfort. Alfred repeated the little prayer that he had been taught to say before going to bed; but to the mother came the bitter thought, ‘God has forsaken us.’ However, the next morning, as they plodded slowly and painfully along, they were overtaken by a farmer returning from a neighboring settlement. He spoke kindly and invited them to ride. The invitation was gladly accepted and the tale of death and suffering was poured into sympathetic ears. He took the wanderers to his home, where they rested until the next day, cared for by the good wife. Late in the month of February they reached the old homestead on the banks of the Hudson, and received a loving and joyful welcome.”

Andrew A. Ellicott, son of Andrew, the astronomer, and Sarah Brown Ellicott, sent the following letter to his Uncle Joseph in Batavia, from an army camp on the frontier.

* Vol. 26 Buffalo Historical Society Publications.

"Six miles from the river. Dec. 26th, 1813.

*"Mr. Joseph Ellicott,

"Dear Uncle: I received your favor of the 24th last evening enclosing forty Dollars which will be very convenient. You may feel yourselves quite safe in Batavia, the Indians have crossed into Canada, and the British keep close quarters in Fort Niagara. We have patrolling parties in Lewiston every day. Yesterday we brought in the dead (only two bodies) that remained unburied, one of them with his head cut entirely off, and cut all to pieces, the other scalped. The grave where the British buried our people was opened, but the spectacle that it presented is too horrid to relate. Seven bodies were found in the grave, among which were the village Constable Gillett, and two sons . . ."

Andrew A. Ellicott was mistaken in respect to Constable Solomon Gillett who was taken prisoner and carried to Montreal and there kept as a prisoner of war until the Peace of Ghent; but he was correct in regard to the finding of the bodies of the two Gillett boys. The bodies were so mutilated that another man's body was mistaken for that of the elder Gillett. He returned to Lewiston after the war and died there in 1824.

Young Mr. Ellicott closes his letter hurriedly:

"I am just off the piquet Guard. I have not closed my eyes since the day before yesterday and the express is hurrying me; you will therefore excuse blunders. Please to inform Sarah (his wife) that I am well and shall return this week if the forces arrive that are expected.

"Your affectionate Nephew Andrew A. Ellicott."

On the 8th of January 1814 a stirring appeal was made by a circular letter asking for aid to be given the citizens of the devastated frontier. The Holland Land Company donated \$2,000 and Joseph Ellicott gave \$200. Early in March the committee had received from

* "Andrew Ellicott, His Life and Letters," by Catherine Van Cortlandt Matthews.

different sources \$13,000 making, with an appropriation from the State Legislature, over \$63,000. This sum did much to relieve the immediate necessities of the sufferers, who were many.

"Throughout all the back settlements, there were the half deserted neighborhoods; the solitary log house, no smoke rising from its stick chimney; cattle, sheep, and swine, hovering around, and looking in vain for someone to deal out their accustomed food. Upon the immediate frontier, stretching out in a long continuous line, from a strong fortress, where the invaders were intrenched, were the blackened remains of once happy homes, scathed and desolate; a gloomy stillness brooding over the scene, so profound, that the gaunt wolf came and lapped clotted snow or snatched the dismembered limb of a human corpse."—Turner.

Two postscripts following a long business letter written by Joseph Ellicott to his cousin James Ellicott are interesting: "P. S.—Thy letter of the 5 ult. was duly received the 17th following, informing me of the Decease of thy Brother and the sickness of thy Sister and Niece."

"N. B.—We feel ourselves safe from any marauding parties of the enemy at this place. There is stationed along Niagara River 16 or 18 hundred regulars, under the command of General Brown, who, however a few days since left there with his suit (suite) destined for Sacketts Harbor. He left Brigadier Scott in command. The enemy still retain Fort Niagara. Twenty new houses have already been erected in Buffalo Village." This letter was headed "Batavia, April 25, 1814." Another epistle to "Esteemed Cousin James Ellicott" was dated "Batavia May 19, 1814." A part of this interesting communication follows:

"I observe by the papers that the British have blockaded our whole coast from East Port to Orleans and they have declared their intentions to stop all neutrals from taking return cargoes from the United States, under the penalty (if taken) of condemning vessel and

cargo. I presume some of your fast sailing schooners will with all their vigilance find their way with cargoes to neutral parts.

"Fort Niagara continues in possession of the British and we have not a single soldier nearer that post than Buffalo Village, where General Scott has encamped with 14 or 15 hundred Regulars. Upwards of 30 dwelling houses have been erected in Buffalo this spring. With much esteem I am thy friend and cousin, Joseph Ellicott."

Another letter dated "Batavia, July 11, 1814" to the same cousin tells of the "opening of the Campaign of our Army in Canada under the command of Major General Jacob Brown." Mr. Ellicott writes: "Those of us who are particularly intimate with that Gentleman, as I am, call him the Quaker General, on account of his formerly being a member of Our Meeting. I am inclined to think that he must be of the same family of Browns as your Mother. His father formerly resided at Brownsville. The General informs me that his Father was called Fox Hunting John Brown.

"For nearly two hours during the Sanguinary Action fought above the mouth of Chipeway, at Street's farm, in the afternoon of the 5 instant, a continued roaring of cannon was heard at this place. The enemy all accounts agree was severely worsted . . .

"Upwards of 500 well Disciplined troops of the 22nd and 23rd Regiments who have mostly been in the Service since the commencement of War left their encamping ground in this place yesterday morning, having arrived here the preceding evening, to join their brethren in arms in Canada. Several hundred regular troops and one company of bombardiers from West Point having a day or two before marched through this place for the same destination, and upwards of 130 British prisoners of war, Artillery and Infantry captured at Fort Erie, marched through here under a guard of the Pennsylvania Volunteers on Friday last for the Military Station at Green Bush. . .

"I had written so far when an express immediately from General Brown's headquarters in Canada, despatched by the General with Orders to proceed to Sackets Harbor, called on me at my House and brought the pleasing Intelligence that the British forces abandoned their batteries and fortifications at Chipeway during the afternoon and evening of Friday last, and that Brigadier-General Scott crossed over the Chipeway River with his Brigade at the Village the same night and took possession of their batteries and fortifications.

"This precipitate movement of the enemy was occasioned by General Brown's undefatigable exertions in throwing a Bridge over the Chipeway River above the Village out of the Annoyance (range) of the British Batteries, which was nearly completed at the period of their retreat. Brigadier-General Scott with his Brigade took up the line of march in pursuit of the enemy the next morning and in six hours thereafter General Brown with main Army following General Scott, at which time Mr. Field the General Express was started for Sackets Harbor. I presume it will not be many days before the fate of the Peninsula is decided.

"Mr. Field, the express, mentioned that General Brown assured him that information which he knew to be correct that the loss the enemy sustained at the battle on Street's Farm the 5th Instant in killed, wounded and missing and prisoners was 513 . . ."

One copy of the following letter of the same date, July 11, 1814, was sent by mail to William Wadsworth and one to Graham Newell:

"Sir:—Mr. Sutherland has returned from his expedition and made his report which however is very incomplete on account of most part of the Sufferers on the Niagara frontier having not as yet returned to their places of abode, their houses being burned, their provision carried away, their houses for the most part being destroyed, the frontier subject to Depredation they are from necessity compelled to sojourn among the old settlements to the Eastward.

"Mr. Sutherland will attend on the commissioners whenever it shall be convenient for them to meet and make arrangements for the distribution of the Monies appropriated for the use of these sufferers and the earlier this object is effected the more agreeable to

"Dear Sir, Yours &c.

"Joseph Ellicott."

*"Mr. Ellicott was much troubled with intruders and Squatters on his cleared land in Buffalo. On July 18, 1814, he wrote to Jonas Harrison in Buffalo, authorizing him to remove certain buildings which a Mr. Fox had placed on his (Ellicott's) land. He did not, he wrote, wish to injure Mr. Fox. 'If he will enter into bonds or any other way to your satisfaction that he will remove his buildings off of the premises in 4, 5 or 6 months, paying you all costs of suits, I am satisfied. I ask nothing from him but to leave the premises. There was nothing vindictive about Mr. Ellicott.'"

On July 14, 1814, Mr. Ellicott wrote: "This day called on Isaac Sutherland and agreed to pay him \$2.50 per day for superintending the erection of a fire-proof Land Office." That was the beginning of the famous Land Office which was completed the next year.

***"In 1813 a toll road had been completed from Syracuse to Buffalo by way of Canandaigua which did much to develop the country. By law, coaches were required to cover six miles an hour and carry United States mail. Robbers were numerous, and drivers were obliged to carry a brace of pistols and a dirk knife. The road paid ten per cent dividends for thirty years. On the old Buffalo road in the days of the stage coach, taverns for the entertainment of the traveling public were necessarily about a mile apart, because the roads were so bad. The corduroy bottom often fell out; and

* Buffalo Historical Society Publications, Vol. XXVI.

** "Tavern Tales of the Early Trails."

with the united efforts of horses, driver and passengers sometimes hours were required to raise the heavy coach from the mire. The coaches were drawn by four, six and sometimes eight-horse teams. The drivers were picturesque and expert, with a wonderful command of language when occasion required. What would they say if they could come back and drive over the old road in a high powered automobile at fifty or sixty miles an hour, and see the airplanes over head making twice better time?"

"After May, 1813," writes Turner, "the Buffalo Gazette was the only chronicler of events on the frontier, during the War of 1812. Its weekly arrival in the back settlements was always anxiously looked for, and seldom has a public journal been more useful and reliable . . . There was an hiatus in its publication, a few weeks, which embraced the invasion of the frontier . . . as early as the 24th of January, 1813, the frontier was again served with the "Buffalo Gazette", printed at Harris Hill, near Williamsville."

Albert Brisbane told an incident of the war which happened in 1814 when he was five years old, and General Scott lay wounded in the Brisbane home at Batavia: "I tiptoed softly up the great stairway and into the General's bed chamber to take a worshipful look at the stricken hero, only to be ordered out very briskly by said hero."

Sometime after the war, General and Mrs. Scott on their wedding journey to Niagara Falls, stopped for a night in Batavia. They were accompanied by the bride's sister. The wedding party went to Keys' Tavern, or The Frontier House as it was then called, which was located on Brisbane Place in what is now Austin Park.

John F. Lay wrote the following account of a war of words between the bride and the landlady: "Business was very brisk at the Frontier House and heavy demands were made upon its Accommodations. The quarters assigned to the bridal party seemed to the

'Belle of the Old Dominion' utterly unworthy of such guests, and she spoke very freely of what she thought was due to General Scott, and Mrs. General Scott, and Mrs. General Scott's sister. The reply of the sturdy Mrs. Keys has come down to us, 'I told Mrs. General Scott and Mrs. General Scott's sister that my house was as good as any in the country, and if they did not like my accommodations they might go elsewhere.' " The imperious Mrs. Scott had been a Miss Mayo, the reigning beauty of Richmond, Va.



CHAPTER XIII.

FULL YEARS.

In the fall of 1815 a nephew of Mr. Ellicott, John B. Ellicott, and his friend, George Brown, Jr., wished to establish a general store in Batavia, and with his usual kindness and liberality Joseph Ellicott wrote scores of letters to various people who were in a position to forward the enterprise and he also placed \$1250 to young Mr. Brown's credit in the Bank of New York, and wrote the following letter to Brown which is interesting because it mentions most of the merchandise carried in a large country store of that time.

"Batavia, Oct. 16, 1815.

"Sir:—Your letter of the 2d ult. is at hand, I approve of your proposition to raise a sum in cash for the purchase of such articles as can not be purchased of wholesale merchants. Not being acquainted with the description of goods which are not saleable here, I applied to Mr. D. E. Evans. He mentions that velvets and corduroys are not much in demand.

"Coarse and tolerable fine Broad Cloths, Casimeres, Flannels and Blankets are always in market. Muslins, coarse and fine are always good articles. Crepe is called for, fancy Calicoes coarse and fine as well. *Fancy Vest patterns* are said to be good Articles. I suppose they ought at this season be such as would accommodate." (He must crack one of his dry jokes.)

[That was a rather gay season in Batavia, and the beaus and belles of the village naturally wished to be fittingly arrayed for social functions. On the evening, December 21st, a grand ball in honor of Messrs. Trowbridge and Hopkins of Ontario County was given at

the home of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew A. Ellicott, which was attended by all the elite.]

“Well made wool and coarse and fine worsted Stockings, *some of which ought to be of the largest sizes*, are much wanted in the store here. Lady’s cotton Stockings of every quality sell here, but those that are fine and not too high priced are preferred. Shawls, pocket handkerchieves of silk and cotton come not amiss. Hats of every description from the common wool to those at \$10 apiece as well—Ladies Shoes I am informed do tolerably well, mens not quite so well as there are many Shoe Makers in the Village who afford nearly a Supply. There are indeed many Articles in the Drygoods line that I do not name which will do well here. I believe all fancy Articles do well, as our people like to be finely dress’d. There are a variety of small articles, Ribbons, tape etc, etc, etc, you ought to bring and the best of needles and sewing thread.

“Articles of Hardware, your knowledge of store keeping will enable you to purchase such as are most in Demand—Crockery and Glassware, I would presume a small assortment of each kind would not be amiss. As for Groceries, our Store Keepers at this place are almost always deficient. I would therefore propose as Winter is approaching that it would be well to bring on 2 Hogsheads of Brown Sugar, one Barrel of White Sugar, 5 cwt. of Lump and one hundred wt. of Loaf—1 Box young Hyson Tea, 2 Du. Hyson Skin and say 150 wt. of Bohea Tea, 150 or 200 lbs. coffee, 2 Boxes chocolate, one quarter cask or barrel lowest price French and 2 of best Spanish Brandy, one Barrel Jamaica Rum, 1 Ditto Holland Ginn, 1 quarter cask Sherry Wine, 1 Ditto Tenneriffe, some cordials—a very small assortment two or three Dozen Bottles of (illegible) a rich French cordial and some of such Description as we find on the side Board at I. N. C. Griffiths (?)—Box and Kegg raisins—1 Box cinnamon, nutmeg, alspice, pepper, mustard, ginger, and Indigo—one cask of rice and a bale of good Cotton

will be indispensable—Plug, twist and cut Tobacco—Snuff, Scotch & Rappee sell well, as also Segars of both kinds, American and Spanish Segars—Pencils of every Description—Shaving Soap, a small supply as well as for Hand Washing, and many other Articles which your knowledge of Store Keeping will suggest.

“In the commencement of this Business it will not be necessary to lay in a large amount of articles of the several and respective Descriptions, of Dry Goods, Hard and Crockery Wares. After having been a little time in business, you will be able to know how far you can with propriety extend your trade.

“Groceries are always called for and will sell, although oftentimes at little profit. But there can be no risk in Articles of this Description unless they should be stove (to pieces) on the Road. However when you become established a little time will enable you to make out the course most to your Interest to pursue.

“In order to assist in answering the purposes of the cash, which you have purposed should be raised to procure an assortment, I enclose herein a Draft in your favor on the Bank of New York for \$1250—\$500 to be added to the \$500 you proposed raising for procuring the Assortment (illegible); for defraying incidental expenses, \$250. I have also appropriated part for the purchase of 120 yards of Carpetting for the floors of the New Land Office, of Different patterns or figures each to contain 30 yards at four different prices from the lowest price such goods can be obtained at \$1.25 per yard. I wish also for my family use 20 or 30 lbs. best Bologna Sausage, and on your arrival in Albany purchase one barrel or half barrel best Connecticut Shad for my use. A few boxes of Scotch Herring would sell and make up your assortment. The residue of the \$250 will answer towards Defraying expenses. It will be proper for you to keep a very particular account of all your expenses of every Description having relation to the business. You will have to procure Scales and Weights for weighing

articles out of the Store, as also Measures for measuring Liquors etc. I am erecting a Store room nearly opposite the Land Office between the Bridge and the Mill. (The Land Office was still in the east wing of Mr. Ellicott's house. The present stone building was not completed until the spring of 1816.)

"A great deal of economy will be necessary in this business, there are upwards of 8 Stores in the Village, Hart's, a very large one; of course there will be considerable competition. For further information in relation to saleable goods I enclose some advertisements from a Utica paper of the Description of the goods handled (?) from that market. The same kind of people reside here and the same kinds of goods of course are used.

"In regard to the transportation of goods, Hart and Hickox of this place put theirs in the care of Trotter and Douglas of Albany (illegible) Sloops that ply between New York and Albany, but putting your goods on board those Sloops and writing to T. & D. on their arrival at Albany to forward them to G. Brown, Batavia, Genesee County, they will employ teams and send them on immediately. On your way up you should call on them and assure them that the Bill for transportation will be punctually paid on their arrival at Batavia, either at the place or be remitted to them, or if you are in cash you can pay them as you come up. I presume you will find Trotter's Sloop at Albany Basin on the North river, by inquiring at these places you may obtain the required information.

"Very respectfully etc.,

"Joseph Ellicott."

Mr. Ellicott planned to purchase that fall a large quantity of nails from Ellicott & Co.'s Lower Mills, Maryland, and have them shipped by the Albany route. In letters to his cousin James Ellicott at Baltimore he calls attention to the necessity of shipping them before the ice closes the Hudson. He writes: "If they should

not leave until so late in the Fall that the roads become so bad that they can not be forwarded at the usual rate it will answer to delay them until Winter."

The following short letter concerning his domestic affairs was written by Mr. Ellicott to John McKinsey of Caledonia in the fall of 1815:

". . . I am much obliged to you for the prompt attention you paid to my request in looking me up a good industrious Scotch girl (for housework).

"In respect to compensation persons ought to be compensated according to their merits. Some girls are more profitable about a House at \$2 per week, than others at 25 cents. . . . You know what kind of a girl suits our House, and the recommendation you have given Isabella is so good an one I will with pleasure allow her \$2 per week. I enclose \$2 to pay her stage fare, and shall be glad how* soon she will make it convenient to take her seat in the Stage for Batavia."

Twenty days later Mr. Ellicott records in his note book: "This evening Isabella Calder arrived in the Stage. She is employed to do House Work and is to have \$2 per week. Her father lives on the 40th acre tract south of Caledonia. He came from near Glasgow some 15 years ago." The stage coach journey from Caledonia to Batavia doubtless was a greater adventure for Isabella than a motor trip from Buffalo to New York would be for a girl of her age at this time.

On April 5, 1816, Mr. Ellicott made this entry in his note book: "Gave Sally Evans (Sarah Evans, his niece) for Pin Money, twenty Dollars."

On April 23, in a letter to his cousin, James Ellicott, Joseph remarks: "It is true I have not written since my letter inquiring about the price of Nails. My Avocations in the Agency of the Dutch Companies Lands are so arduous as I grow in years, that my own little business is seldom thought of by me."

In a long letter dated May 15, 1816, Mr. Ellicott gives minute instructions to Baker Leonard in regard

* Rather poor English.

to finishing the present Land Office. As will be remembered he had used the old east wing of his house as the Company's office. He advises that carpenters and masons be employed by the day and continues:

"The Platform and Steps of the (Land office) Portico are to be completed with stone faced in the manner of those which the Basement story of the church is now putting up" (a good example of the occasional lapse in English construction found in Mr. Ellicott's letters.) The church mentioned was the early St. James Episcopal edifice. After concluding his instructions in regard to the Land Office, he continues: "I wish you also to employ workmen and make additions to my House in the manner as has been shown to you on a plan. Engage persons and excavate the cellar and procure the Stone for the Cellar Walls, Lime and Sand and engage Masons and have them erected. I think the walls ought to be at least 2 feet thick and faced on both sides and laid in a foundation so far below the bottom of the cellar that frost would not affect them." He was just as particular with instructions as to shingles, timber and wages. Mr. Leonard was to be paid \$2.50 per day.

On June 28, 1816, he wrote to J. J. VanderKemp of Philadelphia, asking him to sell stock which he, Ellicott, held in several banks, as he had subscribed to the capital stock of the Bank of Niagara in which he wished to consolidate his funds. "My private expenditures the present season will be considerable on account of erecting an addition to my house which is now the smallest and least commodious of any in the Village. Building in this part of the country comes high on account of the high wages given to mechanics and indeed every article of provision is so scarce and dear that Mechanics and Laborers must be well paid to enable them to procure bread. Flour is \$12 per Barrel and scarce, prime port \$28 per Barrel."

It must be remembered that this year, 1816, is called "The year without a summer." There was a

frost every month of the twelve, and no grain ripened on the Holland Purchase, though Mary Jemison, "the White Woman of the Genesee," had been fortunate in having a crop of corn ripen in her sheltered valley. A pioneer of Wyoming County who had tried without success to buy some kind of grain with which to make bread, was told of Mary Jemison's good crop of corn, and he determined to buy some of it for cornbread, if possible. So the day before Thanksgiving he set out on foot, with a grain sack over his shoulder for the "White Woman's" home at Gardeau Reservation on the Genesee River. He arrived at Mary's cabin late in the afternoon rather weary and hungry, and was greeted with characteristic courtesy and kindness by the tiny white woman whose blond curly hair had become whitened by the snows of many winters, and whose eyes of Irish blue had lost their sparkling brightness. She was dressed in the Seneca Indian costume and wore it with the dignity of a great lady. The man lost no time in making his errand known and was much disappointed when the "White Woman" said, "Yes, I have corn, but none of it is for sale." Then seeing his weary, disheartened look she quickly added: "You are tired and hungry, sit here while I get your supper." Mary never forgot her English and spoke it correctly with a slight Irish brogue though she had lived with the Indians since her capture, at the time of the French and Indian War, when she was a very young girl. She baked a delicious corn loaf in the fire place, fried three goose eggs, and set all before her guest together with a dish of fresh sweet milk. While he was eating she disappeared up the log stairs leading to the loft under the roof of the cabin. Presently the little old lady came down with a bushel of shelled corn in the sack on her back. She dropped the load at the feet of her guest saying, "Take this corn as a gift to your family." The settler took the grain with heartfelt thanks and departed with it on his shoulders, reaching home before sunrise of Thanksgiving Day. It is said that this hardy

pioneer of the Holland Purchase lived to see many Thanksgiving Days and that on each one, before leaving his dinner table loaded with the holiday feast, he told his story of the "White Woman's" kindness, and we may be sure that he told it to Mr. Ellicott and the clerks at the Land Office when he went to Batavia to make a payment on his land.

In writing Rev. Philander Chase of Hartford Connecticut concerning selling a block of lots to a religious association, Ellicott advised the purchase of lots by the individual members, which he believed was the only way to satisfy them all, adding: "Several times I have tried to form a compact settlement of certain societies located in the best townships, but in each instance without success." Three times he had tried the experiment with his own people, the Quakers, but each time he had failed. The land varied so much in nearly every large tract that some would get better holdings than others, so though beautiful in theory the system would not work. He concludes: "However, as a minister may have an influence over his flock that I do not possess it may possibly be that he might conduct them as Moses did the children of Israel to the land of promise, and plant them down at his pleasure, where he deemed most to their advantage. In this case it might be more profitable to purchase by the Township." Of course, the Rev. Chase did not buy the Township but Ellicott had sincerely and humorously expressed his opinion and had nothing to regret.

Mr. Ellicott was appointed one of the first Canal Commissioners in 1816.

In the short period of three years Buffalo had arisen from her ashes, and was incorporated as a village in May, 1816, and in 1817 her destiny as a great commercial port was irrevocably fixed, for in that year the building of the Erie Canal began. The next year the first steamer put afloat on Lake Erie was built, and given the name of a Huron Chief, Walk-in-the-Water. The first experience of the little craft led to the belief

that Black Rock would not be able to retain its past standing, as the port of commerce at the foot of Lake Erie, for the Walk-in-the-Water could not stem the swift current of the Niagara and had to be dragged by oxen, as sail boats were, up to still water in the lake. This helped to arouse determination in the Buffalonians that a harbor must be made by artificial means on the lake; they realized too that the coming canal would terminate at Black Rock unless a sheltered port at Buffalo could be offered to the shipping. The Canal Commissioners had reported that they found it expedient to connect the canal with Lake Erie through Buffalo Creek rather than through the Niagara, but this conclusion hinged upon the creation of a "safe harbor, which could without much expense be enlarged for the accommodation of all boats and vessels that a very extensive trade may hereafter require." This would take more money than the citizens of Buffalo could supply, so it was determined that the State should be appealed to for a loan. This was done, and the Legislature responded favorably in April, 1819, authorizing a loan of \$12,000 for twelve years. "The harbor of Buffalo as planned and constructed by its citizens, under the leadership and superintendence of Judge Wilkinson, served the commerce of the lakes for the next five years. Then in 1826 it was taken under the care of the Federal Government."

The Buffalo of 1818 has been described by Millard Fillmore who visited the village in that year. He was then a youth of eighteen years, and had been teaching school at Skaneateles Lake. In a sketch written for the Buffalo Historical Society he says of the time mentioned above: "After my school closed, finding nothing better to turn my hand to, I tended a sawmill for a month or two, and then shouldered my knapsack and came out to Buffalo to visit some relatives and see the country. That was in May, 1818, and Buffalo then presented a straggling appearance. It was just rising from the ashes and there were many cellars and chim-

neys without houses, showing that its destruction by the British had been complete. My feet had become blistered, and I was sore in every joint and muscle, and suffered intensely. . . . I recollect a long rotten causeway of logs extending across the low ground from Seneca Street nearly to the creek, over which I paddled myself in a canoe. I staid all night at a kind of Indian tavern about six miles from Buffalo."

Among the relatives in this region whom young Millard Fillmore came to visit was his uncle, the Rev. Glezen Fillmore, a Methodist minister who had been preaching in the neighboring towns since 1809, but who was appointed the same year of Millard's visit to a regular circuit which included Buffalo and Black Rock. There was as yet no church building in the Village of Buffalo. Religious services were held in the court house and in the small house that was used for a school. The Methodists in Buffalo numbered only four, but Glezen Fillmore determined that a meeting-house should be built. With the help of Joseph Ellicott and some citizens of New York City the needed money was raised, and the first of Buffalo churches was dedicated in 1819. It was not until after 1817 that requests for land on which to build churches became numerous. The Baptists, Methodists and Friends (Quakers) only asked for small sums as they were content to worship in log or frame structures and Mr. Ellicott often contributed substantial sums from his own funds to help build these places of worship. The Presbyterians and Episcopalians were ambitious to build fine churches and to receive gifts of valuable lots and large sums of money for the erection of churches in Batavia and Buffalo. When the people of Batavia decided to build an Episcopal Church, the Holland Land Company supplied the lot and made a contribution of \$1800.

In 1818 Joseph Ellicott's handsome mansion was complete and far surpassed that of his father at Ellicott's Upper Mills while the garden and grounds were almost if not quite as beautiful as those surrounding the home-

stead in Maryland. His much loved niece, Rachel Evans Loomis, now widowed, had returned to preside over the Batavia home and her uncles were probably as happy and well cared for as at any time of their lives. Rachel Loomis was adored by the nieces and nephews who frequented the Ellicott home. The family historian wrote, "She was to them as a mother, and they were to her as children. The family now lived in the enjoyment of wealth." Many of the nieces and nephews of Joseph and Benjamin looked upon the Batavia mansion as home, and much gaiety and good fellowship were always found there, besides that of balls and other stately functions which the Ellicotts gave. And then the travelers and guests from other States and foreign countries found welcome in this hospitable home, as well as business associates and local people. On one occasion Elizabeth Walker from England, an approved minister of the Society of Friends, accompanied by her traveling companion, stopped on the way to Niagara Falls. Of the handsome furniture the celebrated musical clock was most attractive to these guests, though Friends in those days did not exactly approve of music, but Elizabeth had in former years moved in that social circle in England which by no means disapproved of it. While they were quietly conversing, Mr. Ellicott, with a twinkle in his eyes, made a significant gesture to one of his nieces, to set the hands of the musical clock to a certain tune, which was at once played. It may have taken Elizabeth by surprise but she kept perfect time to the music with her foot nevertheless.



CHAPTER XIV.

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

Several times without success the Dutch Company tried to sell the entire Purchase to the State. Paul D. Evans says: "Such arguments as these were used to induce the State to buy—(1) Americans had always opposed the holding of large bodies of land by foreigners; a purchase by the State would largely do away with this evil in New York; (2) Continued ownership by the Dutch would bring about a great flow of money from New York State to Holland.

In 1819 the Company, harried by tax bills presented at Albany which would greatly increase their expenses, and by an outbreak of criticism, tried to sell to the State. The Governor, DeWitt Clinton, was won over to its support, partly because it was expected that the sale would gain for him and his party strong support in the western counties, where there was now a population to be reckoned with; partly because he hoped to rid himself of the strong political influence wielded by Ellicott in his capacity as the Company's agent. Ellicott had left the Clintonian side of the Democratic Party about that time and joined Van Buren's side, called "Bucktails." He had always declined political office because the Company realized that its agents must not mix in political affairs, nevertheless his influence in that field was great. At this time his nephew, David Ellicott Evans, was a "Bucktail" State Senator who, during the previous sixteen years, had been employed in the land office at Batavia. Mr. Evans supported the measure. And the Senate passed a resolution appointing agents of the State to take the matter up with the general agent. The Assembly, which was Clintonian,

accepted the resolution, but with an amendment as to the personnel of the negotiators:—Instead of three “Bucktails” named by the Senate, the Assembly’s amendment substituted Clintonian commissioners. This was the end of the project. The season was nearing its close and party spirit was so high that a compromise for further consideration in the Senate was out of the question. Having failed twice to sell their lands to the State the Company gave up the idea. In this year, too, the *Niagara Journal*, published in Buffalo, began printing Clintonian propaganda over the signature *Agricola*. The author was a lawyer, Albert H. Tracy, at that time a member of the House of Representatives at Washington. Tracy made many complaints against the Company and all its agents, especially Joseph Ellicott, without offering many helpful suggestions calculated to remedy the situation. Some years before there had been a complaint against the Company by parties in Buffalo in regard to its exemption from road taxes, which was voiced by the *Buffalo Gazette*, and efforts to tax non-resident lands for the improvement of certain roads had been successful in some cases.

Paul Evans writes: “In 1817 Ellicott had successfully combatted the demands of the citizens of Buffalo for a change in the charter which would have allowed them to tax non-resident lands for municipal purposes” (and this still rankled in the minds of some Buffalonians.) Then such lands were subject only to town, county and State taxes. Mr. Ellicott, with unflinching honesty, declared that already the non-residents were paying more than their fair share of the taxes in Buffalo, for their vacant lots were assessed one hundred percent higher than resident lots with buildings. Believing this he resented bitterly the temerity of the *Buffalo Gazette* in now suggesting a change in the tax laws to the further disadvantage of the Company. He cancelled his subscription to the paper and in its stead ordered the *Niagara Journal*. His bitterness was deeper

when in 1819 Agricola's articles made their appearance in that paper. 'It is all political,' he wrote his sub agent, William Peacock. 'It is in the true style of Clintonianism.' Naturally Clinton and his followers had deeply resented Ellicott's forsaking them, and had opened their attack upon the Holland Land Company out of revenge. And the Company was inclined to blame Ellicott for being partisan when it became apparent that the attack was political. For as previously mentioned the Company had always been non-partisan and Ellicott realizing the wisdom of its policy had always refused political offices. But he doubtless reasoned that, as an individual, he had a perfect right to support the policies of Van Buren (instead of Clinton's). It was Ellicott's own powerful personality in a field where there were few others to assume responsibility that built up for him his political power. The enemies which its exercise created struck at him through the Company's affairs in Western New York."

Mr. Ellicott was very fond of a small Batavian named Albert Brisbane, a son of his old friends, James Brisbane, and Mary Lucy Stevens Brisbane. As Albert was ten years old in 1819 Ellicott wished to make him a birthday present. So he gave the little boy a tract of land in the Village of Buffalo, at the same time advising him to keep it until he was twenty-one years of age. "By that time, Albert, the land will be worth a considerable sum of money," said Mr. Ellicott.

The summer of 1819 was the time when the White people tried to buy the entire Seneca Reservation at Buffalo Creek, but Red Jacket rekindled the "Council fires" on July 9th and bitterly attacked the white leaders.

"It is the voice of our people you hear," he said and "we will not sell or trade our lands; we want no white man on our lands . . . no workman, no church, no preachers."

1820 was an exceedingly eventful year for the different branches of the Ellicott clan. In May Mrs.

George Ellicott of Ellicott's Lower Mills, now Ellicott City, Maryland, accompanied by her son George, Jr., and her twin daughters, Ann and Mary, attended New York State Yearly Meeting of Friends in New York City. Afterwards they visited Albany, Saratoga Springs, Batavia and Niagara Falls. They set out in a coach drawn by four horses, a Negro coachman driving. The mother carried the money-box on her lap. It was a tiny horse hair covered trunk. This coach was followed by a wagon which carried the servants and baggage. They found traveling in Western New York rather slow and difficult, and all were delighted when at last they arrived at the hospitable Ellicott home in Batavia, especially Ann, who was devoted to her second cousin, Joseph, though she was only twenty years old at this time and he was about her father's age. But he was her ideal, her Prince Charming, the embodiment of romance. The travelers were most cordially and affectionately welcomed by Joseph and Benjamin and their niece Rachel Evans Loomis; and they remained for some time in Batavia. Many social functions were given in their honor by the prominent families of the rather aristocratic little village.

Early on a perfect June morning in the Ellicott garden, the master of the domain and his cousin Ann sat side by side in the summer-house talking earnestly, but not of the beauty of the garden, the perfume of the flowers, the musical tinkle of water as it splashed into the basin of the fountain, or the songs of the birds in the elms and maples near. They spoke regretfully of the approaching departure of the George Ellicott family. She assured him that his hospitality was "the most delightful experience of her life." And it was then that the great man found courage to tell her of his love, and of his hope that she might learn to love him notwithstanding the difference in their ages. After a time she shyly admitted that she already loved him, that he had been her ideal of manhood ever since she could remember; and how she had looked forward to

his visits to her home in Maryland with delightful anticipation, times when he told her of his work and adventures in conquering the wilderness of Western New York, and how she had always considered him the finest looking, the most talented and wonderful of men. And she consented to his ardent request to be allowed to ask her mother for her hand in marriage.

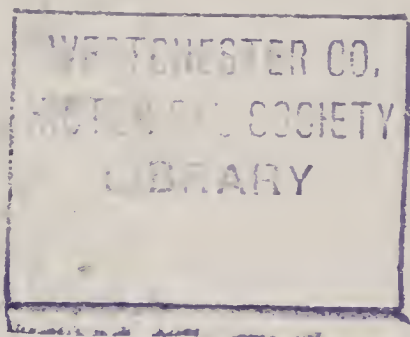
Alas, for their hopes! Ann's mother tactfully but firmly refused to sanction the proposed alliance, giving as reasons the great difference in age and the relationship of second cousin. She also remarked to Ann that, "A great and exceedingly wealthy man, like Cousin Joseph, should choose as his wife a brilliant and mature society woman, one who would do honor to his prominent position."

Neither relatives, friends or enemies ever knew the greatness of Joseph Ellicott's disappointment or his longing for unselfish affection, understanding and appreciation. The loneliness of that great soul, ever longing to be loved for himself, not for his riches, was covered by an impenetrable veil of reserve and pride. Before they parted the lovers vowed to be true to each other until death, and looking forward to Joseph's frequent visits, in her Maryland home, Ann was somewhat comforted. It never occurred to the little Quaker girl to question the authority or wisdom of her parents. Two years after while visiting Ann in her home Joseph was given a little package. It was slipped into his hand as he was leaving. And in the tiny package he found a miniature picture of his sweetheart painted on ivory and framed in gold. On the back was this inscription: "Third Month 21—1822. This picture was painted for Joseph E. from Ann." The same miniature together with a lock of Ann's bright brown hair was resting over Joseph Ellicott's pulseless heart when he was found dead four years later.

The Ellicott family suffered a crushing bereavement in the summer of the year 1820, for Andrew Ellicott, elder brother of Joseph and Benjamin, died at West



Ann Ellicott
(*From a miniature*)



Point, where he was professor of mathematics, on August 28, in the 67th year of his age.

Sarah Brown Ellicott, the adored wife and mother, removed from West Point to Shelby, Orleans County, to live with her son, Andrew A. Ellicott. "Colonel Andrew A. Ellicott, was the patron of Shelby Village," wrote Turner: "He is remembered for his many acts of kindness to new settlers, and especially for the interest he took in the welfare of the Tonawanda Indians. He was adopted into their nation (The Seneca nation) under the Indian name of "Kiawana," which means a good man. He often helped them with bread in seasons of scarcity.

*During the later part of the year 1820 Joseph Ellicott's political enemies were very active; there were those among them who wanted the agency themselves; others sought to influence the State Legislature and wrote letters to prominent persons on the Holland Purchase to influence the settlers against Mr. Ellicott. All this added to other disheartening events of the year affected him terribly, as was intended they should. He became melancholy. And this great depression of spirits he was unable to throw off for any length of time. That year General Agent Busti began a correspondence which resulted in his requesting Mr. Ellicott's resignation from the local agency, but he, well knowing the propaganda that caused the request to be made, declined to resign. Ellicott made an able defense of his position and his acts. None of the Company's lands had paid so well, or been so quickly settled, as those under his charge in Western New York, that there was now a population of eighty thousand on the Purchase, that the debts due the Company, were secured on the land and improvements, amounted to nearly five millions of dollars, that he had, from the resources drawn from the property paid all the costs and charges of surveys, opening roads, taxes, and other

* Fox, Ellicott, Evans Family History.

expenses, and had from time to time remitted to the General Agent more than sixty three thousand dollars, being equal to the first cost of the land—and there remained unsold 1,658,738 acres. He said that “those disaffected persons were hostile to the Company, that the prices at which he held the lands were not too high, as was proved by the people settling on them in preference to other lands. The debt due the Company on the sold lands amounted to less than sixty five dollars to each one of the constantly increasing population, and the product of their labor on the land would, in less than ten years, free it from the debt, particularly as the Erie Canal was an almost accomplished fact.”



CHAPTER XV.

THE CARES OF THIS WORLD AND THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES.

It had been sixteen years since the first visit of Mr. and Mrs. Busti to Western New York, in 1805. They came again in 1821, arriving at Mr. Ellicott's house early in July, accompanied by Mr. Vander Kemp, Mr. Busti's secretary.

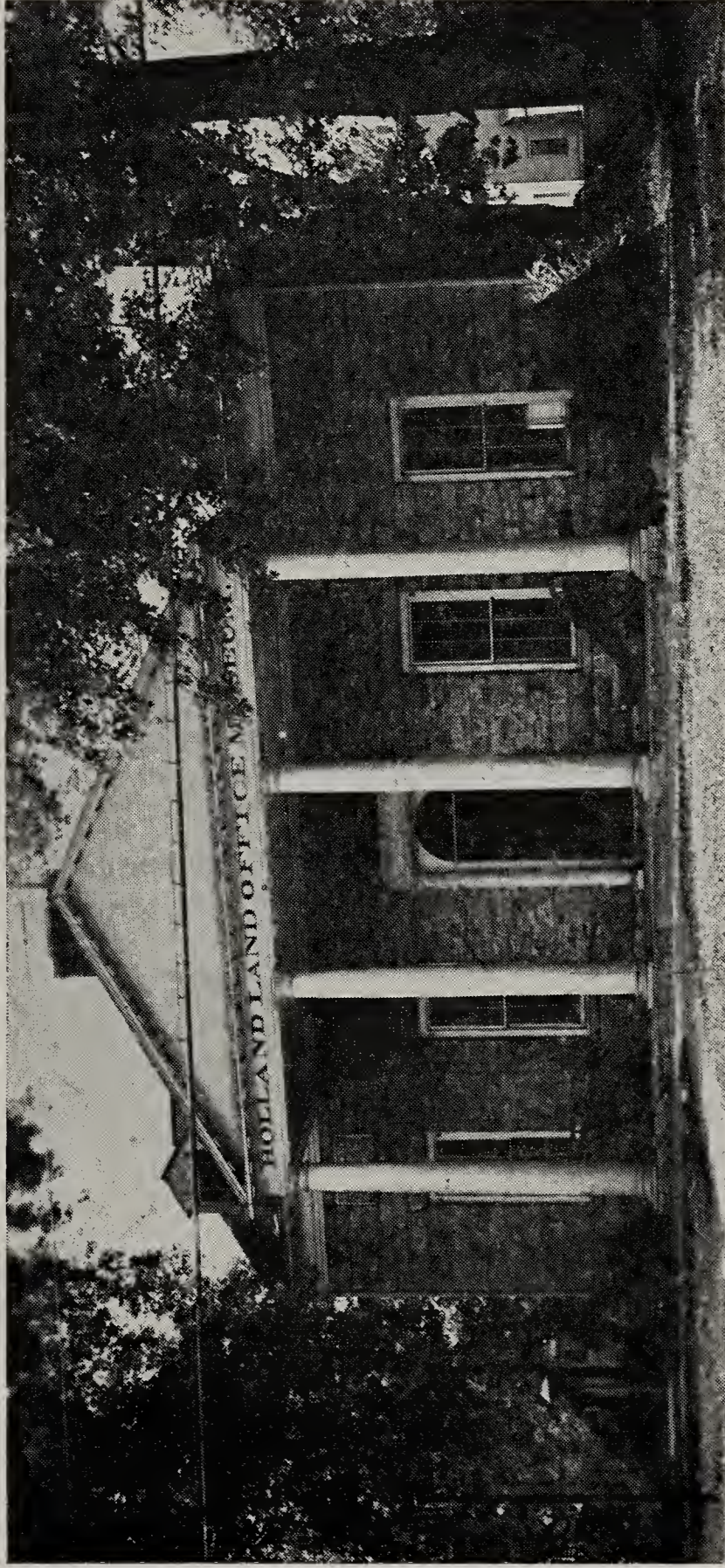
The family historian of the Ellicotts writes: "Cordial relations were soon re-established, and these two men, who had so long guarded the interests of the Holland Land Company as general and local agents, came to a mutual understanding. Their plan was that Mr. Ellicott should form a company of capitalists to buy all the unsold lands, and unpaid debts on the sold lands, and in the meantime Jacob S. Otto, of Philadelphia, should succeed as the resident agent of the company in Batavia."

Turner in his "History of the Holland Purchase" writes an account of this incident of Mr. Busti's visit: "Mr. Busti was visiting the land office in Batavia; the Rev. Mr. R. of the Presbyterian sect called on Mr. Busti and insisted on a donation of land for each society of his persuasion, then formed on the Holland Purchase. Mr. Busti treated the Rev. gentlemen with due courtesy, but showed no disposition to grant his request. Mr. R., encouraged by Mr. Busti's politeness, persevered in his solicitations day after day, until Mr. Busti's patience was almost exhausted, and what finally brought that subject to a crisis was Mr. R.'s following Mr. Busti out of the land office, when he was going to take tea at Mr. Ellicott's, and making a fresh attack, on the piazza of the office. Mr. Busti was evidently vexed, and in reply said: 'Yes, Mr. R., I will give a

tract of one hundred acres, to a religious society in every town on the Purchase, and this is finis.' 'But,' said Mr. R., 'you will give it all to the Presbyterians, will you not? If you do not expressly so decide, the Sectarians will be claiming it, and we shall receive very little benefit from it.' 'Sectarians, no,' was Mr. Busti's hasty reply, 'I abhor sectarians; they had not ought to have any of it, and to save contention, I will give it to the first religious society in every town.' On which Mr. Busti hastened to his tea, and Mr. R. home (about sixteen miles distant) to start runners during the night or the next morning, to rally the Presbyterians in the several towns in his vicinity to apply first and thereby secure the land to themselves.

"The land office was soon flooded with petitions for land for societies organized according to law and empowered to hold real estate, and those who were not, one of which was presented to Mr. Busti before he left, directed to 'General Poll Busti,' on which he remarked that 'it could not be from a religious society for all religious societies read their bibles and knew that Po double l, does not spell Paul . . .' The whole responsibility now rested on Mr. Ellicott to comply with this vague promise of Mr. Busti. The matter was taken in hand and systematized, pains were taken to ascertain the merits of each application, and finally a tract, or tracts of land, not exceeding one hundred acres in all, was granted free of expense, to one or more religious societies regularly organized according to law, in each town on the Purchase, where the Company had land undisposed of. This embraced every town then organized on the Purchase, except Bethany, Genesee Co., and Sheldon, Wyoming Co.

"In performing this thankless duty, for the land was claimed as an absolute right by most of the applicants, the whole proceeding was so managed, under Mr. Ellicott's judicious directions, that amidst all the clamor and contention, which, from the nature of such a proceeding must elicit, no complaint of partiality to



Office of The Holland Company
Built in 1815. Now used as a museum by the
Holland Purchase Historical Society.

WESTCHESTER CO.
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any peculiar sect, nor of the undue weight of influence in any individual was ever charged against the agent of the Company."

During the winter and spring just preceding Mr. Busti's visit the attacks of Mr. Ellicott's political enemies had been violent and widespread. For in the last election Governor Clinton had lost control of the Assembly and not only were both houses of the State Legislature out of hand but also the Council of Appointments, and Ellicott's influence was blamed for Clintonian difficulties in Western New York. So the leaders now opened their deadliest fire upon their former associate, Joseph Ellicott, and nothing would satisfy them but to oust him from the agency of the Holland Land Company, and fill his place with an agent of their own.

*Paul D. Evans in his admirable work, "The Holland Land Company", presents the arguments of both parties fairly and impartially. He calls attention to the fact that "The most violent denunciations came from a group of settlers headed by Samuel Wilkinson, who in the year of 1821 sent a petition for Ellicott's removal to the general agent."

They recommended one Samuel M. Hopkins for the agency and declared that Joseph Ellicott was *detested* by a great majority of the people on the Holland Purchase. They called him "haughty and unapproachable, disregarding public opinion, and the feelings of the settlers."

They wrote the general agent that "Ellicott's office had been made the cabinet of a political party, the seat of its entire management in Western New York."

Benjamin Ellicott was mentioned as "Joseph's brother dependant, who had assisted in taking one of the principal offices of the County from an old and long tried servant of the people;" and nothing could more certainly ruin the Company's interests, the petition

* See foot note, page 347 "The Holland Land Company" by Paul D. Evans.

added menacingly, "than the exercise of such political power by the agent."

The document ended with a prophecy that if Hopkins were chosen for the Batavia Agency there would be no more new taxes on non-resident lands.

When the "Bucktails" heard of the Clintonian scheme to put Hopkins in Ellicott's place, Van Buren and his allies informed Busti that they regretted "the Clintonian effort to secure the great influence of the Holland Land Company for use in the political field, or to gain an advantage by exciting local jealousies against the Company." As for the "Bucktails", they had "ever been steadfast in the protection of the Company's rights."

They "hoped that the Company's able and faithful local agent would be retained in Western New York."

The mildly worded appeal was signed by Martin Van Buren and others and hardly revealed the great concern which "Bucktail" leaders felt. After a while Hopkins went to interview Busti personally, and upon his return to Albany he announced that he was "to have the agency."

Of course the "Bucktails" were greatly worried and began making plans to deal with the situation. Their Senator, Rufus King, undertook to learn how far President Monroe would go to support his friends in New York State. Monroe offered to send through his Secretary of State, such communications as might be placed in his hands, to our government's representative at the Court of the King of the Netherlands, with a request that they be presented to the Directors of the Holland Land Co. "If they studied the true interests of the Company, they would lose no time in removing both Hopkins and Busti."

While Busti failed to realize his own danger, he decided very wisely to pay no attention to either political faction, but to ask for the resignation of the man whose great talents and unswerving integrity had in the short space of twenty years changed a howling

wilderness to a great and valuable empire. The general agent could not forgive his old friend for mixing in politics, and many complaints reached his ears concerning Ellicott's hot temper and lack of tact, so he wrote the Directors of the Company: "The man (Ellicott) may not be lightly cast aside . . ." In case that bills for added taxation of non-resident property came before the Legislature and Ellicott's party supported them, they were sure to become laws, so the change must be deferred for a short time. At the close of the session, Busti wrote Ellicott for his resignation to take effect after the arrival of his successor, Jacob S. Otto. Then early in July as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter the diplomatic agent and his wife enjoyed the hospitality of the Ellicott home at Batavia.

Paul D. Evans sums up his estimate of Joseph Ellicott's work on the Holland Purchase as follows: "The conditions under which Ellicott's retirement took place should not blind us to the greatness of the work which he had done in Western New York. His faults were those of many other strong and able men, his virtues just those most needed on the frontier. Though eventually ill health so affected character (and mind) as to unfit him for dealing with the settlers, it is quite improbable that the Holland Company could have found a man better fitted to direct its operations during the first score of years on the Purchase. In him were combined a vigorous intellect, sound judgement, a strong sense of order, as well as strict integrity. To these should be added an unusual capacity for work and rare practical sense, especially valuable in the opening of a new country. That he made mistakes is certain, the surprising thing is that, in such a difficult position, he made so few of them. In the end the Holland Company's policy on the Purchase proved successful; to a large degree this was due to the work of Ellicott."

Mr. Otto did not succeed Mr. Ellicott until October, 1821. He had been in mercantile business in Phila-

delphia for some years. His many amiable qualities were very pleasing to Mr. Ellicott, especially his retention of most old clerks at the Land Office.

The close of his agency was the end of the active and busy life which began in Joseph Ellicott's youth, and in his case we find another example of the effect upon those who have lived the strenuous life mentally and physically, of an attempt to retire from active duties and live at ease. Joseph Ellicott, the genial and kindly, became irascible and kept even his beloved brother's nerves on edge, not to mention the nieces and nephews, and melancholy settled over him like a dark cloud. He made some unsuccessful attempts to induce capitalists and relatives to unite with him in the purchase of lands. Mr. Busti recalled all propositions made as to unsold lands early in 1822. Thus the proposed sale was terminated and all their intercourse ended.

Visiting the home of his boyhood at Ellicott's Upper Mills, Maryland, in 1822, Mr. Ellicott perfected plans for his sister, Rachel Ellicott Evans, and his nephew, Lewis E. Evans, to remove to Batavia. "His great wealth, and his desire to advance the interests of his nieces and nephews caused their removal from time to time from their homes in Maryland to more desirable homes in Western New York," writes the family historian.

John B. Ellicott, who had been in partnership with George Brown in a large general store at Batavia, married in 1822 and soon after moved to Medina, Orleans County. Medina was laid out in the center of a tract of land containing fourteen hundred acres which had been deeded to him and his cousin David Ellicott Evans by their uncle Joseph Ellicott. It is on Oak Orchard Creek, which furnished excellent mill seats, and on which they built a flouring mill. After a time he sold his interest to David E. Evans and went to live on an extensive tract of land with a mill seat at East Pembroke, seven miles west of Batavia. The

tract was deeded to him by his Uncle Joseph. John B. Ellicott's handsome home at East Pembroke on the main road from Batavia to Buffalo was and is, a beautiful place, and the large mills which he built on Tonawanda Creek have contributed much to the improvement of the village and the convenience of the surrounding country. John B. Ellicott eventually moved back to Batavia where he died in 1872, aged seventy-seven years.

During the last months of 1823 Mr. Ellicott was engaged in making his will. The task seemed to make both his physical and mental condition worse. His nephews Andrew A. Ellicott and Lewis Ellicott Evans accompanied him on a trip which they hoped would prove beneficial. He visited his niece, Alice Evans Peacock, and her husband, at Mayville, N. Y., and from there went to Painesville, O., then to Meadville and Pittsburgh, Penna., and then returned to Batavia. There was little if any improvement in Mr. Ellicott's condition. This was in early summer of 1824.

Judge Peacock wrote Mr. Ellicott expressing surprise that he had traveled over "that terrible road from Cattaraugus to Buffalo." The wagon in which the Ellicott party rode had been overturned and the horses ran away. The Judge evidently tried to amuse his much loved friend and divert his mind from imaginary physical ailments and real mental distress, for after writing of sundry other things he launches into a very amusing account of his first voyage aboard a steam boat . . . "I will now proceed to give you some account of my Steam Boat voyage being the first in my life. I left the Buffalo Steam Boat wharf on board the Steam Boat Superior Commanded by Captain Bunker, on Wednesday the 26th May at 1/2 past 9 o'clock A.M. bound for Erie, Penna., it being the first time I had ever been on board of a Steam Boat as a passenger, the Bell rung, the gangway fastened and we put out to sea, everything was novel to me, it created in my mind very curious Ideas, to see such an unwieldy ves-

sel propelled through the water as by a charm, and at the same time opposed by a head wind, at the rate of 7 or 8 miles an Hour, carrying on her back and in her belly 150 Living animals and all of them at their ease, enjoying all the comfort and pleasure they could have done had they been in a well regulated Hotel, was to me really amusing. Some were walking, some reading, some sleeping, some calling for Punch, others for wine and Brandy, some viewing the distant Landscapes of the American and Canadian shores (I was one of that number) as we passed along, some playing at whist, some at Back-gammon, some conversing on the anticipated pleasures they were soon to realize in a new Country, some were engaged on the subject of Canals and their utility, others up (on) Theology and the proper road to heaven, others again on the science of Chymistry, Metaphysics, Hydraulics and natural Philosophy, etc., upon the whole it was a most extraordinary and singular day to me—we had nothing to mar the pleasure, none of those angry and violent gales of wind that some times endangers the lives of persons, but all was Calm, Cheerful and serene—we cast Anchor opposite the Light House, went on board of a small boat, and landed at the Erie wharf in safety, and was in John Dickson's Steam Boat Coffee House at 10 o'clock P. M.—thus did I pass from Buffalo to Erie 80 miles in 12 1/2 Hours—with the same ease and convenience I could have had in a House. It is difficult for me to regulate my mind, and make it bend to time and distance on board of a Steam Boat, it seems at first thought impossible to be at Buffalo at 1/2 past 9 A. M. and arrive at Erie at 10 P. M. without any exertion on my part—but so is the fact—? had to remain at John Dickson's one day in order to take the stage on Friday . . . I left Erie at 7 o'clock in the morning and arrived at Mayville at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and found our people all well and glad to see me."

1825 was an important year in the history of the

State for the Erie Canal was opened throughout its entire length that year, on the 26th of October, with ceremonies as imposing as they could be made. In regard to this great celebration, Larned, Historian of Buffalo, wrote: "Governor De Witt Clinton with a committee of distinguished men from other parts of the State had come to Buffalo to take passage back on the first boat that would traverse the full length of the canal. On the morning of the 26th they were escorted in procession to a handsomely fitted packet boat, the Seneca-Chief, where brief addresses were made by Mr. Jesse Hawley, who had been the first (as early as 1807) to advocate the building of the canal the full length of the State, and by Judge Forward."

One of the earliest and by far the most efficient advocates of the Erie Canal, Joseph Ellicott, was not present owing to ill health.

Larned's account of the celebration continues: "At ten o'clock the Seneca-Chief, drawn by four gray horses, slipped from her wharf and leading three other boats in procession, started on her memorable voyage. That moment a cannon was fired, an instant later a faint sound of another report was heard from far down the canal, and so the starting of the Governor's boat was signalled from gun to gun, planted at proper distances apart, till announcement reached Albany, and a responsive signal came back. The message was three hours and twenty minutes in making its circuit of some seven hundred miles."

At this time Batavia had a population of 3,352, nearly a thousand more than Buffalo, but the lake and canal port soon forged ahead.

Mr. Ellicott's physical and mental condition became worse towards the close of the year, and in November he went to New York for treatment, accompanied by Dr. John B. Cotes, his nephews, Joseph Ellicott, Jr., and David Ellicott Evans, also his close friends, Ebenezer Mix, and Judge Nixon. A packet boat was chartered at Albion to convey the party to Albany. Passing

down the canal he gave his attendants minute and interesting details of its history and the part he had taken in it, and conversed upon topics of general interest with no indication of insanity, but if the theme changed to his personal affairs, his mind conjured up fearful apprehensions of present and approaching illness and death.

A council of physicians was called upon the arrival of the party in New York, and the council decided upon his entering the Hospital at Bellevue where his old friend and associate upon the board of Canal Commissioners, Thomas Eddy, was Superintendent. He remained there for several months under medical treatment but his mental and physical infirmities increased. He scribbled over reams of paper in a strange medley indicative of his malady. Sometimes he addressed a few lines to a friend and his sentences would be connected and his ideas clearly expressed, then again beginning to think of himself and his own infirmities he became wild and incoherent. Sometimes he lived over again scenes in the deep forests of Western New York, and again his wandering fancy carried him back to his boyhood home in Maryland and his old playmates.

"What was that I heard at Quarterly Meeting about 'The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches'?

"Andrew considered the stars, I considered the earth, I have much land, he had much love.

"Alone, alone! Dear little Ann!

"Benjamin has many friends, he does not need me.

"However much I give to people, they do not love me.

"Red Jacket asked me, 'Where does Justice live now'?

"What could I do to stem the White men's greed?"

Thus he raved on and on until his imperious spirit faltered and Reason tottered to the final crash. His days ended in darkness, but his work stands fine and enduring as the principles which directed his life. The

wilderness which he conquered and caused to blossom as the rose speaks his praise. The cities which he founded are monuments to his genius and vision. Though a man of great wealth, called "cold and despotic" by his enemies, not one of them could deny his honesty, exactness, efficiency and versatility. Just and punctilious in business he was magnificently generous to his relatives and friends and kind to the poor and unfortunate.

•

On August 19th, 1826, Mr. Ellicott escaped his keepers and when they found his body, life had fled.

A few months after his death his body, which had been buried in New York, was brought to Batavia and with that of his brother Benjamin, who died in Williams-ville a short time after Joseph's decease, was laid to rest in Batavia Cemetery.

"Where the rain might rain upon them,
Where the sun might shine upon them,
Where the winds might sigh upon them,
Where the snow might lie upon them."

THE END

[Addenda on page 155]





Addenda

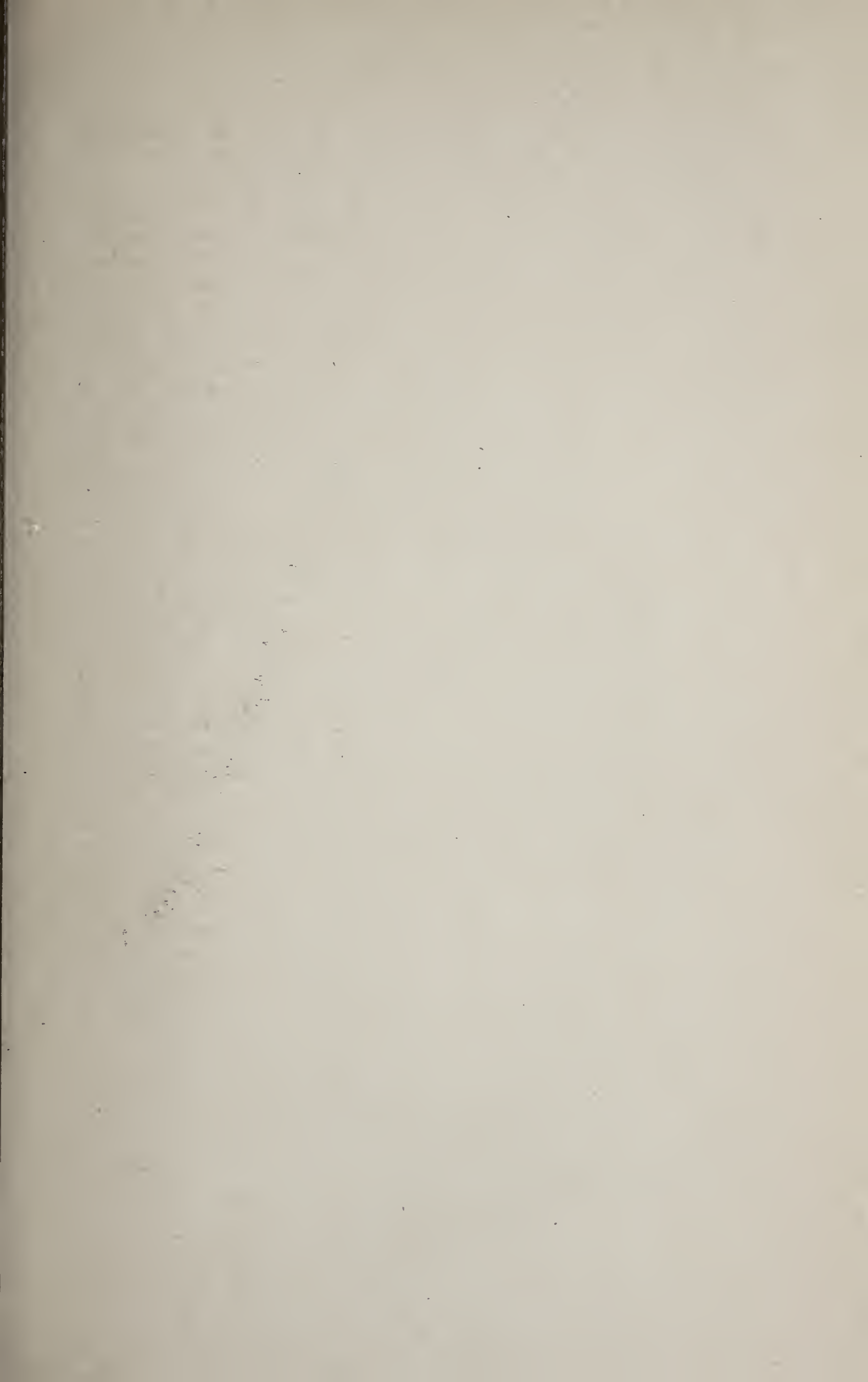
The Ellicott monument in Batavia Cemetery was erected in 1849 by Rachel Ellicott Evans, in memory of her brothers Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott, and restored by Deo-on-go-wa Chapter D. A. R. of Batavia and relatives of the Ellicott family in 1931. The inscription upon the bronze plate of the west side is in memory of Joseph, who is buried on the south side of the monument. The bronze on the north side commemorates Benjamin, who is buried on that side in the same grave with his twin sister, Rachel Ellicott Evans. A double marker stands at the head of their grave bearing the names Benjamin and Rachel. The inscriptions on the bronze plates are exact copies of the original inscriptions.

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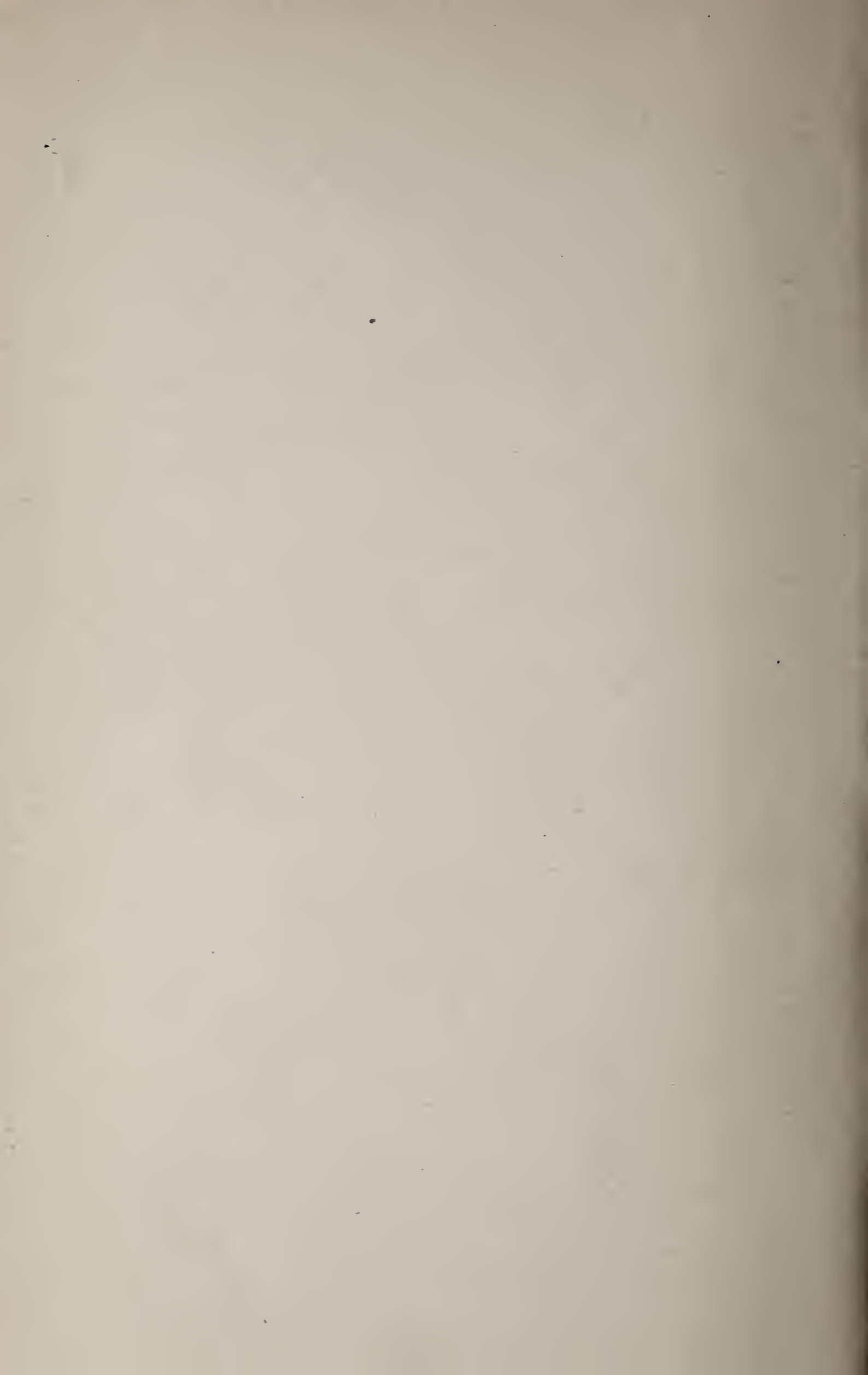
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